WHAT AILS OUR YOUTH?

GEORGE A. COE

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By
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AN OLD TEACHER
GRATEFULLY DEDICATES THIS BOOK
TO THOSE OF HIS STUDENTS
WHO QUESTIONED HIS TEACHINGS

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FOREWORD

What ails the youth of to-day? Every one is ready with an answer. "They have grown perverse because we have ceased to administer the old-fashioned discipline," says one. "It is because we are neglecting conversion," says another. "They are not perverse," remarks a third, "what ails them is their youthfulness; ten years more of experience will cure it." Oriental critics, like Tagore and Gandhi, if we should interrogate them, would say: "The seed that your Western civilization has sown is sprouting in your youths; they are not especially perverse—they merely show the defects of your whole system of life."

No simple formula, certainly, will do justice to the situation of modern young people. Their environment has become far more complex than the psychology of adolescence, and, moreover, a cleavage is appearing that sets apart two classes among them, the conventional (which comprises the vast majority) and the critical (which constitutes only a small, though growing, minority).

It is the purpose of this book to achieve a sympathetic understanding of both groups, and to discover the place and the possible significance of each in our civilization. Both are getting on the nerves of many members of the older generation, though on different nerves and for very different reasons.

The first part of our inquiry (Chapter I) concerns the question whether the general run of our conventional youth exhibits merely the usual marks of adolescence or also special faults that are characteristic of the present growing generation. Characteristic faults are found, and they are traced to causes that are deeply embedded in modern life as a whole.

It is then shown (Chapter II) that current education, itself under the influence of the same causes, fails to give the young people the sort of help that could prevent or counteract these faults.

The complacency of secondary and higher education in this situation leads us to ask (Chapter III) what, then, education really is for; and we are led to overhaul our conventional notions of what it is to be *well*-educated.

Inasmuch as one might expect education under specifically professed religious auspices to deal rigorously with the virtues and the faults of youth, the church colleges are interrogated (Chapter IV) as to whether they are supplying what is elsewhere lacking.

A problem of another sort confronts us in our endeavor to understand what is happening in certain parts of the youth movement (Chapter V). We are led at last to question whether our civilization as a whole has not failed to understand the capacities of youth, and whether sound social policy would not lead to a new relation between youth and maturity.

Finally (in the Epilogue), in view of the contrast between the hoariness of religious institutions and the freshness and variability of youth, especially youth enjoying freedom in a modern environment, the question

of the possible permanent hold of religion upon the young is briefly considered.

It is natural, no doubt, for an educationist to feel rather keenly what is lacking in youth and to look for both causes and cures in the general field of education, formal and informal. But I do not cast longing glances backward toward any educational Egypt. The faults of youth are due less to relaxation of the old discipline than to the inadequacy and illusoriness of it. We are suffering less from neglect of the conversion-process than from a constricted ecclesiastical notion of the forces that make and mar character. The Oriental criticism of Western civilization, however, comes uncomfortably near to the truth. Youth is ailing, yet the ailment is not specifically a disease of youth but of a general social order that is out of order. If I find myself limping in my left knee, I am likely to assume that my left knee is the seat of my ailment and that the cure must be direct treatment of this joint; but medical science may tell me that my lameness is due to a poison that originates elsewhere and that, in order to walk normally, I must permit the pulling of a tooth!

GEORGE A. COE

By a Camp-fire
In a Forest
July 31, 1924

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WHAT AILS OUR YOUTH?

CHAPTER I

WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO OUR YOUNG PEOPLE?

By "our young people" is meant Americans of both sexes who are in the adolescent period, particularly those of secondary-school and college age. That they are somehow different from the young people of "our generation" is a common remark of persons in middle life and beyond. As a rule, this difference makes us of the older generation uneasy. "Something ails" the youth of to-day. This opinion was in evidence for several years before the Great War, and since the War it has become an alarmed conviction.

What, then, really is this that has happened, or is happening, to our young people? My own first answer to this question was another question: Is there anything here that is significantly, or in any important way, new? Anything more, say, than the use of modern means, such as motion pictures, trolley cars, and automobiles, for doing the same sort of things that adolescents always have done? Or, perhaps, does increase of liberty bring into the open certain sorts of conduct that always were either unobtrusively present or else prevented by repression? Is it true, then, that anything specific ails the present generation of adolescents? Isn't the alarm of us old men and women just a repetition of alarms that the old always have felt with respect to the conduct of youth?

No doubt most of us idealize our own past, and as our years increase we grow more sensitive to the perennial contrasts between youth and age. Yet, after making all reasonable allowance for these difficulties of perspective, a little study of present-day young life in its setting will surely reveal certain characteristic trends that have not been universal and that cannot be attributed to youth as such.

The "setting," as the term is here used, means the more pervasive influences that play upon individuals in the mass, perhaps determining their conduct without their being aware of what is occurring. What is happening with youth in our day depends materially upon the general state of our civilization and the particular responses that the young are making to it. The *meaning* of particular acts and habits, the trend of an individual or of a group, must be sought for in these encompassing facts. We are by no means at the end of the story when we make an inventory of what strikes us as desirable or undesirable, especially as agreeable or disagreeable. The main question is not, What baggage is one travelling with? but, In what direction is one going? From what country, and to what country?

The faults that everybody notices—the baggage—are easily summarized: Craze for excitement; immersion in the external and the superficial; lack of reverence and of respect; disregard for reasonable restraints in conduct and for reasonable reticence in speech; conformity to mass sentiment—"going with the crowd"; lack of individuality; living merely in the present, and general purposelessness. Even among college students, as we are told on all hands, there is dearth of intellectual

interests. Dawdling is general, and the most absorbing occupations are recreations and athletics.

Merely to bemoan these things is bootless. Moreover, merely to blame the youth of our time as though, by some sort of perverted ingenuity, they had invented their own faults, would be false to the facts (as will be shown) and a hindrance to the discovery of remedies. More harmful still, it would forestall inquiry into the most important item of all, which I have already called "the setting." To this let us turn. We shall discover that the young are reacting in natural ways to conditions for which we, their elders, are responsible, if anybody is.

I

YOUTH'S OUTLOOK UPON LIFE IS BEING TRANSFORMED BY THE ENORMOUS INCREASE IN MAN'S CONTROL OF THE FORCES OF NATURE

This increased control is not reserved for a few masters only. The youth of to-day, not merely his parents, or capitalists, or the managers of great enterprises, can see things, hear things, do things that never before were within the range of either old or young. He can make and break contacts with others over an unprecedented area and with hitherto undreamed-of speed. Therefore, as never before in human history he is stimulated to get new experiences and to do many new things. Youth feels the tingle of life at a vast number of points, the stimulus of change, variety, the not-yet-experienced. To modern science and invention, then, and to the environment of modern enterprise, we must look if we

would understand what is happening to our young people.

Stimulation like this has occurred with practical inevitability. But the specific interests that have been awakened, and the specific habits that result, must be traced to specific features of the new experiences. A material part of the excitability, the externality, and the superficiality of which complaint is made is due, not directly to the new outlook created by science and invention, but indirectly through commercial enterprises that utilize scientific knowledge in order to invent and sell to the young new and strange sensations.

Thus, as never before, the world abounds in invitations that are naturally, and not improperly, attractive to the young person. No wonder that he accepts too many invitations; no wonder that he responds to the new, the specious, and the easy; no wonder that he fails to realize the value of the old culture and the old discipline; no wonder that his experience of power makes him heady. That he promptly makes for himself ruts within these new opportunities, and actually becomes conventionalized in his modernity is again as natural as it is to be human.

No wonder, I say, that his opportunities have overwhelmed him. For has not the adult world also been carried off its feet by the flood of new powers that science and invention have let loose? I cannot discover any clear dividing line in this matter as between youth and age, or as between different social and economic classes. There are individual adults and individual adolescents who control modern resources in the interest of life instead of being distracted by them; yet the mass of adults,

like the mass of adolescents, seems to be ailing from undigested opportunity. We shall see this increasingly as the theme of this essay develops.

II

THE CHANGED STATUS OF THE FEMALE IN OUR SOCIETY CREATES NEW PROBLEMS FOR THE YOUTH OF BOTH SEXES

It causes difficulty for a reason closely parallel with the effects of science and invention. The new status of the female opens new possibilities for which we are unprepared by either habit or foresighted thought. The conduct of girls and of young women does not, and cannot, follow the old grooves. Of course not; nevertheless, we are not ready for anything different; we are disconcerted, and older persons are painfully surprised by much that, if we took the conditions into account, would cause no surprise at all. We must not go on estimating female conduct from the standpoint of our own past, which means the standpoint of standards that assumed the inequality of the sexes; we must acquire the habit of assuming for the female her new freedom and equality, not merely as a status but also as new activities and functions naturally growing out of it.

Consider, now, the difficult position of girls and young women who are thrust into this veritable new world of opportunities without precedents to light the way, and even without mature friends whose experience qualifies them as guides. The young female is unprepared; she has had no opportunity to become prepared; yet life showers her with invitations to achieve, to ad-

venture, to enjoy, all spiced with novelty and unprecedented self-determination. Sometimes giddiness results, of course. Some shallowness, externality, vanity occur, just as one might expect. Sex-interests that always were present become more conspicuous. Bad taste gets new opportunities to display its quality.

If we who were brought up under the old conventions are pained, and are tempted simply to condemn, let us ask ourselves this question: Who among us can say just what is in good taste in woman's new world? Two generations ago almost anybody could have told with confidence what is womanly and what unwomanly, but who can do so to-day? I have yet to find a person who can tell why it is manly for men to smoke and unwomanly for women; or why anything that is fit for the ears of a young man is unfit for the ears of a young woman; or why it is any more fitting for a woman than for a man to be economically dependent upon a person of the opposite sex; or why it is less appropriate for a woman than for a man to be the head of a household; or why a woman would be out of place in the seat of a bishop or on the bench of the Supreme Court of the United States. Of all things, certainly the male sex is not prepared, either by nature or by experience, to prescribe to the female how to use her freedom. She will have to experiment, and errors will occur; but the right to experiment and to make mistakes is not an exclusive prerogative of the male.

Let us not think that the new status of the female is a matter that concerns primarily only a half of our youth, as though women and girls could find a solution of their problem and present it ready-made to men and boys. No; experimental way-finding must be mutual

more than ever—this, granted the new freedom in a world in which sex-attraction is a basic and permanent fact, is inherently involved in the new emancipation. The conduct of our boys and young men to-day is what it is largely because they, too, are unprepared for the new situation.

It is probable that both sexes, on the whole, are meeting these difficulties as well as we had any right to hope. Indeed, if we reflect upon the evasive treatment of sex by the present older generation, its false modesty, its double standard, its complaisance toward legalized lust, and its cruelty toward some forms of unlegalized sex-relations; and if, in addition, we bring to mind the innate power and versatility of the sex-drive, surely we shall be surprised, not at the increasing unconventionality of speech and conduct, not at the increase of "petting," not at the rapid growth of divorce, not at the possible increase of illicit sex-intercourse, but rather at the general self-restraint and foresight that we witness among our emancipated youth. In the sense that they are struggling and to some extent floundering in the presence of an unsolved problem, something does ail them, but it is less a disease than an incident of social growth.

III

IN THE LIFE OF YOUTH HUMAN CONTACTS HAVE VASTLY INCREASED, AND THEY HAVE LARGELY SHIFTED FROM DOMESTIC TO NON-DOMESTIC TYPES

There was a time when most youths in the United States lived and moved and had their being in what may fairly be called a domestic circle of human con-

tacts. The centre—the focus both in space and in interest—was the family. It dwelt in a detached house—a bewilderingly spacious one to the eyes of a present-day city dweller—with its own garden. This was not merely a place for eating and sleeping, but also for genuinely communal living with the members of one's family, and for visiting with one's friends. And about this place were gathered the things and the activities that were intended to make of the dwelling what we Americans call "home" in distinction from house.

The persons whom the youth chiefly met were those who dwelt within a community of neighbors every one of whom was acquainted with every other one. The storekeeper with whom one traded was known as an acquaintance, not merely as a medium of merchandise. Moreover, many sorts of merchandise were purchased from the same individual, not from as many individuals as there were articles to be procured. Most youths worked with their fathers, but if one went into outside employment, it was usually with a neighbor, and the fellow-employees were neighbors.

These may justly be called domestic types of contact because they made possible, in a high degree, the integration of both the self and the other that reaches its climax in the family. For many sides of one individual responded to many sides of another. One person was not just "employer," another "employee"; one "buyer," another "seller"; one male, the other female. Nor were the human contacts casual, incidental, ended as soon as a transaction was complete.

How different are the contacts of the city youth of to-day, and even, in many places, of the village and

country youth! As the dwelling has become less a home, so the people one meets are met under fewer human aspects, for briefer periods, in scattered places, on behalf of narrower interests. One deals more with a system, less with human beings as human; and human beings are known as classes, groups, or types rather than as individual personalities. As the home dwindles toward a place for eating and sleeping, so, for a large proportion of the population, the neighborhood scarcely exists any longer.

Of the many consequences of all this I shall mention only two, which are central to our present problem. In the domestic types of experience the youth was (1) kept in a variety of living contacts with his elders, but (2) he had large scope for individual purposes and for recognition as an individual. In modern city life both these values wane toward extinction. The youth is "in" on few things with his elders. He does not get acquainted with employer or dealer—this side of life is mechanized and depersonalized. His human contacts are chiefly with other youth. On the other hand, though he has unprecedented negative liberty, as in the disposition of leisure time, he has little scope for self-expression in creative work of his own. Even his leisure-time activities, reacting from the mechanical routine of his occupation, tend to become hectic and yet mechanized by the commercial form that they take. The lot of students is, on the whole, better. They have more contacts with mature persons, particularly teachers, certainly; yet these contacts are relatively narrow, and, as far as the colleges are concerned, there is general segregation of both work and play from domestic and neighborly experience.

IV

OUR INDUSTRIAL CIVILIZATION ITSELF IS AILING, AND IT COMMUNICATES ITS AILMENT TO THE YOUNG PEOPLE

That our youth are not the only section of society that has been overwhelmed by the opportunities newly opened by science and invention has been intimated already. The externality, the distractedness, the search for sensations, the "go somewhere" spirit that characterize adult recreations and amusements are obvious enough. If one asks what proportion of the young people find an evening at home attractive, one should ask likewise what proportion of the adults will be found at home on Saturday night because they prefer domestic joys. Should we not ask, then, whether the young do not catch their ailment from their elders?

The problem goes deeper than the restless search for pleasures, however. We must think not only of how the people spend their leisure time, but also of the effects of science and invention upon occupations, and through occupations upon character. What meaning is life acquiring through our present industrial order? This question is so large that we shall by no means compass it even in outline in the few paragraphs that are at our disposal. Yet it is possible, if we go directly at the dynamic centre of our industrial organization, to perceive the general character of what is happening to us. This dynamic centre is, in a word, the opportunity, made possible chiefly within the last two generations, for unprecedented profits through the mastery and the exploitation of natural resources. In order to effect this

control of non-human resources, it has been necessary to organize man-power on a large scale. The organization and management of man-power, in turn, has become a sphere for scientific analysis and guidance. Thus our industrial system (which, we should remember, is a new thing in the world) gives a characteristic meaning to life, both as our life is related to nature and as it is related to fellow-men. Let us briefly formulate this meaning.

First, then, our industry approaches nature, not as raw material that invites us to production, craftsmanship, creativity, but as an invitation to secure income. The end-result aimed at is not a piece of goods ready for consumption, not the maximum of consumption at all, but a bit of money in one's hand or in the bank. If the question be asked whether men seek money itself or rather the power that money brings, the answer is, Money is clearly and sharply sought, and power, too, is sought, but the kinds and qualities of power are not sharply discriminated or evaluated. Hence the predominance among us, or at least the leadership among us, of men who exhibit economic drive and capacity coupled with a partly naïve and partly conventionalized approach to the extra-financial values.

A second result is the mechanization of men. The system implies, for the vast majority, either routinized attendance upon a machine or else routinized obedience to superiors. This mechanization spreads apace from the unskilled occupations into the clerical and managerial functions. The trend of organization is toward the elimination of thought and discretion from the duties of the largest possible proportion of the personnel. Thus

the situation becomes unfavorable to the exercise of the powers that are most distinctively human—analysis, appreciation, choice, reflective co-operation. Undoubtedly even the masters of the system find themselves more and more servants of the system, and less and less able to exercise these human traits with unrestrained freedom.

A third result is that this mechanization creates a chasm between work and leisure, and sends men in search of exciting pleasures to offset the deadening routine. The leaders and masters, who have the most and spend the most, become an example that the masses tend to follow as far as income permits, so that there is constant pressure through almost the whole social scale both to increase income and to increase the cost of one's pleasures.

A fourth result is the drawing of a vast number of women, particularly young women, into industrial and business occupations, with resulting changes in their outlook upon life. They become conscious of the power that an individual income gives; they choose their pleasures in their own way; they mingle in female masses; they meet more men, but (as already indicated) in specialized or part situations; and they have more alternatives and more kinds of success to allure them.

Now, the young people of to-day are helplessly immersed in this industrial system, which is not organized in the interest of young life and its development, but of income, profits, and spending. The occupations of men impoverish the spirits of men, and then with ready money invite them to seek refreshment in things that can be bought rather than in things that can be had only by achieving them. This is true, on the whole, of

academically privileged youth as well as of young people who are in occupations. For not only is this the system for which the student is consciously preparing; it is the system whence he draws his sustenance; and it is his dominant environment. Is the education that is given him likewise under the dominance of standards derived from our industrialism? This question must wait until we reach the next chapter.

To the question "What ails our youth?" a part of the answer, then, must be, The occupations of adults, with the meanings for life that flow therefrom.

V

OUR YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE BEEN PLUNGED INTO THESE NEW CONDITIONS WITHOUT HAVING OPPORTUNITY FOR EDUCATION APPROPRIATE THERETO

If the vocation of living is to be determined from generation to generation in relation to the changing environment, interests, and activities of men; and if the conditions of modern life, as we have seen reason to hold, profoundly affect the experiences out of which self-guidance is evolved, then education appropriate to our day would deal directly, analytically, and inspiringly with modern opportunities for a reasonable life and with modern hindrances thereto. This our education does not do, and our young people are showing the results of the deprivation.

At not one of the four points already noted is the education that is now provided squarely facing the problem of rationally purposeful living. Consider, for example, the slight place given to critical examination

of motives or ends as related to industrial facts and processes. What do people really get out of the industrial system? What effects does it have upon men, women, and children? The manufacturing and the distribution of goods are at the same time and at every point the making of some sort of human life. What sort, as a matter of fact? What moral principles and ideals are implicit in the system, and do they need revision?

It is not unfair to current education to say that its predominant interest in the industrial and economic system relates to means and processes rather than ends, and that in this absorption in means and processes it tacitly takes for granted the legitimacy of present conventional purposes. The vocation within one's occupation, the larger human meaning of the system of which one's occupation is a part—these are forgotten, or else mentioned in such general or sentimental terms that the analytic application to actual processes is missed. Our youth need, for example, stimulus to the critical evaluation of property, profits, and power over men. In the absence of such analysis, the major ethical consequences of the system are missed, and the remedial and palliative tasks (which are often recognized) become merely minor moralities. On the whole, then, education itself is reproducing in youths, instead of correcting, the moral confusion that prevails in adult life.

If, now, we were to grant the occupational presuppositions that prevail in the mature parts of society, we should have to conclude that our young people are not so ailing after all. For, on the whole, they live up to the rules of the game. They mean no particular harm

to anybody; they are willing to exert themselves when they see enough in it for themselves (the very standard of business); money to have and to spend is their chief serious concern (just as it is with their elders); and as for their pleasures, why, these skittish young people proceed upon practically the same principles as their parents. The young, because they are more limber than their elders, can go farther and do more kinds of things; and because they are young they dare to carry their principles farther than cautious age; but let not the old blocks find too much fault with the chips!

If we approach the problem of youth from the other phases of its present setting—the expansion of life through science and invention, the new status of the female, and the multiplying and shifting of human contacts from domestic to non-domestic types—we find parallel lacks in current education.

What significance for life ought the triumphs of modern science to have? Is our world as much larger as it should be? Has our freedom really increased, and if so how and where? In what respects are we better men because of the sciences? And especially how much could we improve ourselves by a wise use of scientific method? Are any of our fellows being hurt, repressed, or neglected because we employ the sciences in our occupations? Unless in education we open questions like these, we must expect our young people to look upon the resources of the world partly as playthings, partly as instruments for unhumanized economic purposes.

Our schools and colleges cannot too soon begin to strengthen the studies that concern the social interests that depend upon the fact of sex. Sex instruction, vo-

cations for women, home-making (for both sexes!)—these merely touch the problem. We must have the courage to face with students the history and the problems of marriage and the family, including the economic and other consequences that already are seen growing out of the emancipation of the female sex. Individual conduct must be seen in relation to its causes and in relation to the whole social movement. Until our youths have opportunity to get some such perspective, and to feel the pull of large ambitions, we must expect petty conduct and the following of ill-considered views.

So with respect to the new, big, mechanized human world. How be a neighbor in such a world? Isn't this almost the primal question for the education of to-day? It cannot be answered by platitudes about good will. The art of organizing life in the interest of life is going to require, increasingly under modern conditions, both analysis of modern life and a purpose to bring its economic forces into the service of the many rather than the few. As long as education is weak at this point, what wonder that our youth make superficial contacts where the deepest interests are involved? What wonder that they early yield themselves to the mechanization of the major parts of their own existence?

On the whole, then, it appears that the defects of youth pass down from us, their elders; but, of course, once fastened upon a generation of youth they tend to give corresponding character to this generation's maturity. We face here something like a vicious circle. We, the elders who are in charge of the education and the other conditions that affect the health of youth, are ourselves infected; how, then, can we assume the part of

physician? As our discussion goes forward we shall see that the answer to this question involves two considerations: *First*, we must attack our own ailments at the same time that we attack those of the young; *second*, the young must take part in the attack upon both their ailment and ours. For a time, then, I shall continue to point out the "setting," created or maintained by us of the older generation, that needs to be, so to speak, re-set. Afterward I shall inquire into the function of youth itself in this re-setting.

CHAPTER II

WHAT AILS EDUCATION?

A rapidly changing world, and slowly changing schools and colleges—this is the fact with which we have to reckon. Possibly we shall be glad that education, because it conserves a cultural heritage, changes slowly; possibly we shall be sorry because we think education ought to be also adjustment to the flowing conditions of living; but in any case the slowness is a fact, and it creates a problem. How much does modern life require us to know that the schools and colleges are reluctant to admit to the curriculum!

But even this is not the most serious phase of the matter; it is, in fact, more a secondary than a primary symptom. For the most momentous fact about the newness of modern life is that it forces upon us new choices, not merely new facts. It requires us to assign relative values in vast new areas. The assignment of these values, the making of these choices, is *ipso facto* the process of deciding what sort of men we will be. What I am interested in, what I do, how I apportion my time and energy—these define my significance both to others and to myself. The meaning of life, what it is to be human, is thus fatefully involved in all our modernity. There is neither psychology nor practical sense in the assumption that, though the means and the processes of living are profoundly changing, our ethical and religious outlooks do not, or at least need not, develop.

The primary and basic adaptation that education should help us to make is the readjustment—or re-creation—of purposes. The reason why we must have science, scientific method, and all the other good things that have begun to secure a place in the curriculum is that we do and must live in new ways, we do and must become different. *In what ways shall we be different?* What are the most desirable sorts of human excellence that our new control of natural resources and our new control of behavior bring within our reach? These are the great questions for the educator.

Here is the deeper reason for concern with respect to present educational practice and failure to practice. For, though modern means, tools, and processes of life are getting into the curriculum, no corresponding movement with respect to the critical evaluation of life is in evidence. New information the young can get, and new skills, but ends-in-view are, on the whole, left to chance, to custom, or to some sentimental proclamation of highly generalized and unsifted ethical formulas.

The problem that here meets us can be found in education at all levels. Even the elementary school touches a period when not only the minor moralities but also—indeed, more particularly—the basic interpretations of life begin to take strong hold.[1] This should not be forgotten in what is now to be said with respect to the education of adolescents, particularly in colleges. What happens or fails to happen in the colleges is, on the whole, a trustworthy clue to what is happening or fail-

[1] I have discussed this point and the significance of it for educational policy both in my *Social Theory of Religious Education* and in my *Law and Freedom in the School.*

ing to happen in secondary schools also. We may therefore take the colleges as typical of the formal educational factor in the unsatisfactory condition of our youth. Our question is: Why is it that the colleges, which are supposed to have the broadest outlook, and to bring the education of adolescents to a proper climax, do not make *education for the vocation of living* their supreme purpose and test? What has conventionalized and mechanized them? What has dulled the spiritual apprehension of teachers and administrators? I shall not, of course, merely assume the existence of these faults on the basis of what already has been said, but amass the evidence in connection with the analysis of causes.

The solution of our problem we shall find in no single fact, but rather in the confluence of several circumstances, some older, some more recent. Certain circumstances that occur particularly in colleges that are under ecclesiastical patronage or control will be reserved to the next chapter. Here let us note more general causes that apply to the whole academic situation. The first of these causes is the oldest of all.

I

THE DEVELOPMENT OF FRESH LIFE-PURPOSES THROUGH EDUCATION IS HINDERED BY THE STILL PREVALENT VIEW THAT TEACHING IS SOMETHING DONE BY THE TEACHER TO THE STUDENT

This untechnical statement will serve as a rough-and-ready indication of a state of mind, and of an habitual practice, on the part of college teachers. The teacher assumes that *he* is to do the essential thing, exercise the essential judgment required; that his own will is the in-

clusive active principle of the teaching situation. One is reminded of an irate farmer who, speaking to a refractory colt, says: "I'll larn ye!" In classroom procedure this view implies that teaching is producing an impact of certain professor-determined materials upon the mind of the youth. Producing the impact is the teacher's job. Hence the essence of most examinations could be phrased as: "What is this that the professor has thrown at you?" From the student's point of view the question might be worded: "What has hit me?" The A's and the Phi Beta Kappa keys go to the men and women who give the fullest descriptions of the professor's missiles.

In a graduate class in the philosophy of education the professor announced that the work of each student, the examination included, would be to write his own philosophy of education. "Begin where you are," said he, "and think your way as far as you can. You will be judged, not by your arrival or failure to arrive at any fixed point, but by the distance you go from your starting point, wherever it is. I am here simply to help you get the problems opened and find appropriate material." A student immediately asked: "Professor, are we actually to get credit for doing our own thinking?"

The theory that teaching is doing something to pupils has been much criticised in our day, it is true, but rarely, except in the sphere of elementary education, does the criticism go far enough. If pupil-activity happens to be stressed in the secondary school or college, the activity in question means active attention to some given material. That is, the teacher merely "puts over" his own purpose by means of the action of others. He selects *for* his students in the only area within which his teaching

moves; he does not educate them to select for themselves, or to form purposes in ever broader and broader circles.

The lack of experience in making important judgments and choices explains the conventionality of some students and the anchorless drifting of others. To observe, analyze, and judge the purposes of men; to evaluate the effects of modern conditions upon the humanity of men; to see how the sciences and the mechanisms of modern industry and commerce might be made to enrich the spirit of all men; to discipline one's desires and ambitions in the light of such experience—this, one may assume, is the only sort of college experience that will really cure the aimlessness of students.

Here, too, we find a partial clue to the rather peculiar position of the teacher in the social structure. On the whole, he has the position of an adjunct to the current purposes of others. He teaches what has been; or he demonstrates how this or that occurs; or he shows the way to this or that skill; all of which is, or at least may be, aside from the important decisions that men are making. He may be consulted as to how to get this or that done most efficiently and economically; he is likely to be respected, but who thinks of him as a guide in the development of our civilization? Neither parents, nor ecclesiastics, nor statesmen, nor business men, nor students think of him except as ancillary to the remainder of the population. Exceptions there are, of course, but this is the ruling conception of the function of the office. Here is one factor in the spiritual dulness, or at least conventionality, that generally characterizes the administration of the colleges. How different would they be,

and how different would be the place of both student and teacher in the social structure, if teaching were understood to be, first and foremost, the stimulation of students to a critical examination of the values of our civilization! If this is not the proper primary aim of higher education, and of secondary education also, what is?

II

EDUCATION FOR THE VOCATION OF LIVING HAS BEEN HINDERED, LIKEWISE, BY THE MANNER IN WHICH THE NECESSITY FOR SPECIALIZATION IN TEACHING HAS BEEN HANDLED

By the *manner* in which it has been handled; specialization has been rendered necessary, of course, by the enormous growth of knowledge and the diversification of interests. But our colleges have not seen that, in a world in which interests, knowledge, and skill are diversified, purposes and values require corresponding analysis and correspondingly skilful application. What a gap exists between the focalized and organized material of the curriculum, on the one hand, and on the other hand the easy-going, conventional judgments of collegians concerning the values of our civilization—or even their failure to have a judgment! Now, this contrast applies to present college administration, is in fact due to administration. The department of physics teaches physics, not living by the help of physics, nor the possible improvement of life by physics, nor the evils that accompany the present applications of mechanical laws in industry. Whatever outlook there is in the department of physics toward vocation concerns simply the control

of matter, as in engineering, without reference to the human interests that are, in fact, partly promoted and partly defeated by our increased application of physical laws. Let this serve as a sample. Much the same could be said of most other departments. The neglect of values has gone so far that one cannot take for granted that departments of literature will make any deliberate effort to develop a habit of enjoying literature!

It would not be true to say that the colleges ignore the necessity of a meaningful life; what they fail to provide for is the continuous re-examination of values in the light of new knowledge and as related to new conditions. We often hear it said that getting departmentalized knowledge into the heads of students is a minor function of the college. But in actual practice it certainly is the major function, while the valuation-function is treated as an addendum, an uncritical process that is not inherently related to the systematic, critical work of the classroom. There is a tendency, moreover, to treat it as another departmental or administrative specialty rather than as a proper phase of all experience in whatever department.

That this is a fair statement of the situation will appear from the specific ways in which colleges attempt to provide for the growth of serious purposes in students. Thus we have: Advisers (the same specialists in subject-matter abstracted from life-purposes); A dean (who is expected, all by himself, to provide hundreds of students with a key to the moral purpose of the college); A chapel service (often a religious form; at best either worship not focalized upon specific issues, or else a hit-and-miss discussion of miscellaneous topics); A professor of Bible

(who, if he is competent, is another subject-matter specialist); Eminent preachers on Sunday (each selecting for his topic what he guesses the students need); Talks by representative men from the different professions (with no assurance of a critical evaluation of any of them); Backing for college Christian Associations; An occasional religious revival[1]). Some denominational institutions take the stand that they will employ as teachers only active Christians.

We shall not belittle any of these if we declare that they cannot, either separately or in combination, provide the necessary moral critique of the actual and possible uses of modern knowledge. No mere fringe sewn upon the academic garment can do it. No generalized *plus* standing over against an expertly specialized set of departments can do it. Hortatory methods and "influence" cannot supply the place of critical study. The business of being human, of the mutual attainment of satisfactory selves in a satisfactory society, is not the vague, general, sentimental thing that it has come to be in the popular mind and even in the academic mind; it is the humanizing of particular processes—of all particular processes that are subject in any manner to our control. Literally all; living is not another specialty added to mathematics, chemistry, German, psychology, business administration; these themselves are special phases of living, to be tested by an immanent, ever-present consciousness of the human. There will be no solution for the problem now before us until functions to be performed, values for human living, criticism of

[1] I shall have occasion to speak of college pastors and denominational foundations in the next chapter.

purposes and of conduct in occupations, reach the student consciousness in immediate unity with his acquaintance with fact, process, and skill.

That this is not a visionary notion one can easily ascertain by noting what happens in classes that pursue a subject under constant realization of its use and meaning. You will find such classes in professional schools, in trade schools, and in the pre-professional courses in the colleges. You will find them in the night schools, in the workers' colleges, and now and then in a department of philosophy, or of sociology, or of biblical literature. What would happen if the whole of the high-school and college curriculum were to be organized around such questions as these: What shall I need to do, and therefore to know, as a voter, a taxpayer, a married person, a parent, a member of a church, a member of the community; especially, what are the unsolved problems of life and society, and what decisions may I be called upon to make? What are my resources for rational and lasting happiness? Why is there so much unhappiness? Why don't we get rid of ancient, recognized evils? What is valid, if anything, in Oriental judgments upon Western civilization? What is the relation of my present practices and habits to my future occupation, and to the well-being of society? Some such forward look toward the vocation of living is the thing that is needed to bring health to our colleges. Some colleges have taken steps in this direction, and the results seem to be promising.[1]

[1] The so-called "orientation courses" for freshmen are a recognition of certain of these needs, particularly the need for thinking the different college subjects in relation to one another. The results appear to be

Why should we be puzzled at all by the lack of intellectual interest in the colleges? It is the natural result of dissecting knowledge into dead specimens instead of acquiring and using it for the living purposes of men now living. And why should the immersion of students in athletics and recreations, college publications, dramatics, and what not, be a mystery to us? These young persons have an urge to do things that employ their powers of initiative, judgment, and management. Some say that students go in for athletics with intemperate zeal because they just must have something important to do! In athletics there are problems, risks, the possibility of unprecedented things.

III

A CRITICAL APPROACH TO THE VALUES OF MODERN LIFE HAS BEEN HINDERED BY THE FINANCIAL DEPENDENCE OF THE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Our population has been growing rapidly, and an ever larger proportion of it seeks an academic education. Hence the enlargement and multiplication of academic institutions. At the same time, new departments are called for by the expansion of learning and the diversification of technical pursuits. To meet the standards of modern science, laboratories must be built. Enlargement of libraries and of faculties is necessary, and in short a rebuilding of our whole academic structure. This

good, as far as they go. There are signs of a new intellectual seriousness in some of the colleges. Much more, however, is necessary, namely, a critique of modern life, not only at the beginning of the college course, but throughout it, and related to every part of the instruction.

has been going on with increasing speed for about two generations. Hence, the need for money, a need made appreciably larger because our American standard glories in buildings, many and impressive. The need became enormous when endowments sufficient to maintain these expanded establishments came into question.

At just the period when these needs were acutely arising the modern industrial system was ripening in this country, and enormous profits were being made. Education naturally sought a share in these profits. Hence the entrance into educational dynamics of the captains of industry, themselves largely without academic training or traditions. Their influence can be traced through State legislatures and State boards to the State universities, on the one hand, and through individual gifts it can be traced to the denominational and independent institutions, on the other. Acquaintance with the financially successful was sought; their virtues were extolled; their gifts were heralded; academic halls and foundations were named for them; and . . . they were put upon boards of control.

In accordance with our American legal assumptions and customs, the corporation known as a college or university is usually (not quite always) identical with the board of trustees or directors. Identical, that is, in law, so that the trustees have a formal right to enforce their own judgment of any academic question. They may decide what shall be taught or not taught; they are the *fons et origo*, as far as control is concerned, of everything academic in their respective institutions.

Of course they do not ordinarily vote upon academic details as contrasted with financial management. In-

stead, they employ a president, who is their special expert agent of control. Now, the president sustains a peculiar relation to education. He is selected, not by his academic peers, but by the trustees; he is answerable, not to professional educators, but to a board most of whose members are chosen because of financial standing or ability, or because of some other non-academic relationship. The president is expected, however, to fill the double rôle of educational leader or expert, on the one hand, and financial manager, on the other. He has to raise money and to take the lead in apportioning the expenditures. At this point financial and educational functions coalesce, for each expenditure is for something rather than something else, and therefore represents the selection of one academic value as against other possible ones.

For his academic policies as well as his financial management the president is responsible, mark it well, to the trustees alone. As a rule they do not judge what they regard as his strictly academic administration; rather, they accept him as their expert in education, as they accept an attorney in matters of law. On the other hand, he is so far from being answerable to the faculties for any act of his that he practically controls appointments, promotions, and departmental expansions and contractions. His power is academic, yet it is the power of the purse. There are presidents, of course, who study education so deeply that they have weight strictly as educators, but this is a personal achievement, and not the ground of official authority.

Hence it is that the system of administration gravitates toward the level of those who fill the purse. One

does not need to look for any specific purpose to make our colleges adjuncts of our defective economic order; under the conditions just described there is bound to be seepage, at least. The administration will lean toward one subject-matter rather than another; staff positions and promotions will go predominantly to those toward whom the president and the trustees feel comfortable; departmental specialization approaching that of a department store (responsibility for the goods but not for the customer) will seem like efficiency; larger efficiencies on the present level will seem more imperative than changing the level; here and there direct invasions of academic liberty will occur, but for the most part there will be depression rather than suppression—that is, such mechanization of the professorial mind that one does not even desire to utter judgments upon the major issues of life.

One can hardly open this question without attempting to estimate Upton Sinclair's *The Goose Step*. Is this book just propaganda for a social theory, and unreliable as to facts, or does it, on the whole, tell the truth about existing academic conditions? To me Sinclair's socialism is not the crux of the work at all; I am not nearly as ready as he is to scent conspiracy, and I trust that I am not quite as ready as he is to ascribe evil motives or to hit heads. Nothing in the book interests me much except its statements of fact. These have a right to the attention of every thinking man. If they are calumnious, they should be disavowed and denounced. If they are generally true—if as much as fifty per cent of them are anywhere near the truth—then we are in a diseased academic condition. When the book appeared, I said to

myself: "Here is a challenge that cannot be evaded, for here is a vast collection of prima facie facts, gathered with amazing and tenacious industry. They must be either denied or re-interpreted by college authorities; or conditions must be excused; or else guilt is confessed." I hoped for vigorous counter-attacks at least equal in moral fervor to that of the author of the book. Counter-attack, if possible, should be easy, for Sinclair is profuse in his specifications as to names, dates, places, and documents.

The general silence—one can almost hear it—of our academic administrators must be taken as an additional datum with respect to the allegations made. Here and there a critic has pointed out minor inaccuracies, or a failure to use certain printed records, or Sinclair's bad taste. But in no instance known to me has any one claimed that the total picture is untrue to the total situation, or that substantial injustice has been done to more than one or two men or institutions. It therefore seems to me that the merest intellectual fairness must recognize the book as containing a most important collection of data upon the current history of higher education in America.

Why are our youth ailing? Partly because the spirit of our ailing industrial order has infected our colleges and universities.

IV

A CRITICAL APPROACH TO THE VALUES OF MODERN LIFE HAS BEEN HINDERED, LIKEWISE, BY THE PERCOLATION INTO THE ACADEMIC MIND OF THE ETHICAL ASSUMPTIONS OF THE MODERN NATIONALISTIC STATE

The modern state is both broadly and intimately intertwined with nearly all the forces that make or mar life. Consider, now, that the modern state represents the modern industrial and economic order, especially its leaders, and that it therefore gravitates toward economic imperialism; then consider what would be involved in the thoughtless acceptance of the sovereignty of such a state *as an ethical principle.* It would mean, substantially, the sanctifying of massed selfishness and massed greed; it would mean permitting ourselves to act corporately upon principles that we could not approve in private life; and it would mean giving ethical authority over ourselves to any government officials who happen at the moment to be able to determine what the sovereign state shall do or abstain from doing.

But such ethical assumptions have percolated through almost our whole American society, the colleges included. Again and again it has been remarked that the authority of the state is taking the place of the authority of God. It is reported that a minister who publicly mentioned the frequent miscarriage of justice and the loss of faith in our courts was summoned before a judge and roundly reprimanded. In fact, the summons is said to have contained a threat that if the minister did not come voluntarily, the sheriff would be sent after him. Men like this judge abound in office and out of it. They

actually believe that we, the people, have abdicated our prerogative of judging the state that we ourselves have created! To criticise the flag, or the Constitution, or the army; to advocate any fundamental change in our mode of government; or to point out the bad conduct of the United States toward weaker peoples—in short, to deny the assumed ethical finality of the state is taken, even in America, as lese-majesty!

And the colleges are not known to be actively counteracting this paganism. How many of the colleges and universities were seriously stirred by the arbitrary suspension of the Constitution in the denial of the right of free speech and free assemblage for a number of years—indeed the present denial of this right in a number of States? How many churches, the mothers of colleges, were seriously stirred? Do not the colleges and the churches realize that one of their most precious and most costly traditions is precisely that of free thought, free speech, and free assemblage? But the ethics of the current nationalistic state has supplanted the old Protestant and academic ethics at this point. If it be said that the colleges and the churches are speaking freely about the things that they want to talk about, and that therefore they do not feel the issue, the conclusion is the same—they are in an ethical stupor in the presence of a gigantic ethical mistake in our organized life.

Have we not a right to look to the colleges for ethical leadership with respect to such an issue as war? Yet the colleges have been, on the whole, simply plastic clay in the hands of government officials whom no one regards as moral leaders. Yonder is a college that has been wont from its beginning to give open allegiance to

Christian ideals, a college that has done more than most academic institutions to make good its profession, a college for which I entertain a respect that I feel for few; yet in this college the United States War Department is getting young men ready for any next war that Washington officials may bungle us into. I do not now raise the question whether fighting is not, under some circumstances, a holy and Christian act; I merely point out that this college and others are not preparing students to fight in such a contingency, but teaching them rather to abdicate their moral judgment.

Is it not obvious that the lack of moral discrimination on the part of our youth; their readiness to accept the specious and the conventional, and their submergence of the individual in the crowd are, in part, a reflection of corresponding faults in higher education?

CHAPTER III

WHEN IS A YOUTH WELL-EDUCATED?

The emphatic word in this question is "well." We are providing for the youth of to-day educational opportunity unprecedented in range of studies, in costliness, and in range of population classes to which it is accessible. Yet our youth are ailing at certain points where education should make for health. Already have we found it necessary, if we are to understand present-day young people, to understand also certain influences that control education. May we not need to scrutinize also our current thinking upon the ideals of education? For they, as well as our slips in practice, may have a part in producing the unsatisfactory situation that confronts us.

Certainly, any ideal for youth that we entertain, any fault that we deplore, leads our thought directly into the realm of educational ideals. What should we expect education to do for the young? What is it to be *well*-educated? Though an excursion into this question may seem at first sight not to be a part of our main inquiry, we shall find as we proceed that it really belongs within the diagnosis of the youth-situation to-day. Much more is it essential to any reasonable outlook for improvement in this situation. I shall therefore indulge the hope that the reader will be patient toward a few generalized principles of education that must first be stated before the bearing of them upon our main problem can fully appear.

I

WHAT IS THE RELATION BETWEEN THE "WELL" IN WELL-EDUCATED AND THE "WELL" IN WELL-LIVING?

The reason for asking this question is not so much the necessity, for our present purpose, of a complete answer as the necessity for a clear point of view. I propose that we assume without argument that there is normally a vital relation between these two "wells," and that, whenever they become unrelated, education becomes abnormal. A good education is education for good living. This does not imply that static or cut-and-dried standards of goodness are to be authoritatively imposed by teaching; it does not imply a type of curriculum or of method that is obnoxious to the freedom of the child or to the project principle in general; but it does imply something as to the kind of experience that the school provides for the pupil. It implies that from the school there shall radiate into the larger world of maturity habits and modes of activity that can be recognized as good from the standpoint of the needs of this larger world.

Looked at in its individual aspect, this means that for every individual there is a vocation of living; that he is here for a purpose or for purposes that he is to find and make his own; and that his education should help him find them and appropriate them. This is a broad assumption, of course. One might organize a whole philosophy of ethics, of religion, and of history around the concept of the vocation of a man as such; and of course the heart of any general philosophy of education is just here. Life is for something, and education is for life.

This makes education as such "vocational." It is a pity that this term has become attached to special education for particular occupations, which might better be called "occupational" education. For each particular occupation is *for* something that is beyond as well as within its characteristic operations. Modern educators have not stressed education for occupations a bit too much, in my opinion—rather, too little; but we are in danger of not sufficiently connecting the technic of an occupation with the vocation of the occupation. Occupational education that is limited to technic and to efficiency in the achievement of uncriticised ends is fatally deficient. Its tendency is to leave students weak precisely where we already have found a weakness of modern youth, namely, in the range and the depth of their purposes.

The vocation of a man, and the vocation of an occupation, concern, of course, our life together rather than in solitude (though this be not excluded). The meaning of the good life is to be found in some sort or sorts of social ideals and values. The "well" in "well-educated," accordingly, is to be understood as referring to some apprehension of social ideals, some devotion to them, and some efficiency in realizing them. What an absurdity it would be to certify as well-educated a youth who never has been socially awakened—well-educated, yet negligible as far as social well-being and social progress are concerned! To the extent to which current education does not contribute to a social awakening, we must trace the social heedlessness of our youth to the schools and colleges, whether of the state or of the church, or otherwise.

One further assumption that will guide the treatment of this question is that the vocation of living is a religious vocation—a vocation inclusive of every individual and of every occupation. The social ideals and endeavors that have been mentioned will be taken, not as mere bubbles on a sea of mere movement, but as manifestations in us of an inclusive meaning, an inclusive purposeful system. We are called, I shall take for granted, to co-operate with God in the creation of a satisfactory society. I shall further take for granted that the simple conduct and teaching of Jesus of Nazareth show the way for social aspiration and for real social growth.

Whether these notions of the relation of "well" in "well-educated" to "well" in "well-living" are to be merely general and platitudinous, however, will depend upon whether or not we carry them with us and use them when we think of education in the concrete. Let us, then, in the light of these assumptions, pass in rapid review certain of our every-day attitudes toward schools, schooling, and the educated man.

II

DO CONVENTIONAL CONCEPTS OF THE EDUCATED MAN TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE VOCATION OF WELL-LIVING?

If we were challenged to describe the really educated man, what items certainly would be included in our answer? Undoubtedly we should name, in one or another form and combination, most, at least, of the following marks:

1. An educated man is one who is trained to use the tools of human intercourse with readiness, precision, and accuracy. We mean, especially, language (particularly the mother tongue, both in speech and in writing) and the rudiments of number. Our age is adding to the tools of intercourse statistical symbols, such as tables and graphs.

2. An educated man must be able to study and to think without guidance from others. He must have command of the method of the mind, and he must be—to some extent—a thinker, not a mere imitator. He may or may not have more opinions than other persons, but he has more opinions to which he has a right.

3. An educated man must have sufficient knowledge of nature to understand the main processes upon which human life and happiness depend. He must likewise possess general intelligence as to the method of science and as to the main achievements of the sciences.

4. An educated man knows enough of history to enable him to understand the main achievements of man. He is able to put each type of society, and each change of society, into a general perspective.

5. An educated man is acquainted with the major resources for intellectual and æsthetic enjoyment. He knows nature, literature, music, and the other arts sufficiently to choose superior to inferior enjoyments.

6. An educated man is marked by his interests as well as by his trained abilities. His attention is habitually attracted by significant rather than trivial objects, events, pursuits, and enjoyments. He lives in a larger and more finely discriminated world than the uneducated man.

7. We have been coming to think that an educated man must have not only this general culture but also training for a specific occupation. A mere dilettante lacks something that we desire to include in the notion of education. Focalized activity that is directed toward some sort of efficiency has to be included. This slight step away from the purely leisure-class conception of culture has been taken somewhat generally, at least in this country.

These seven specifications, taken together, constitute a severe standard, possibly an unusually severe one. They represent our ideal rather than our practice. How many colleges would be willing to be judged by the first six of them (the occupational item being entirely ignored)? Of what proportion of college seniors at graduation can it be said that item one is truly descriptive? Item two? And so on?

Yet, severe as this standard is, it does not specifically and unequivocally ascribe to the educated man anything in the nature of well-living or of readiness therefor. Nothing has yet been said about loyalties, or typical purposes, or attitudes toward individuals, toward organized society, or toward God. The vocation of living has been slurred. Let us, then, go forward to further marks of the well-educated man.

8. An educated man must have toward his fellows the habitual attitudes that are commonly called ethical —such attitudes as honor and honesty, helpfulness and good-will, and co-operation.

9. An educated man must have loyalties to at least some of the important organizations and institutions of society, such as one's family, one's country, one's church.

Edward Everett Hale's *Man Without a Country* was internally undeveloped, a victim of spiritual deprivation, before the woes of his external plight began.

10. I shall take the liberty of adding yet another item to this already imposing, even staggering list, not assuming that every one will do so, and not failing to appreciate the reasons why some cannot do so. If there is an inclusive meaning in life, an inclusive purpose in all our good purposes, then the sort of education that I have been outlining should include some apprehension of, and feeling for, the divine; the ideally educated man will reverence God, and know how to worship.

Probably this enumeration of the marks of an educated man goes as far as most of us feel any need of going. We should be satisfied if our schools and colleges were turning out men and women like this. Indeed, we should rejoice with exceeding joy. For we realize, as we run through the list, how prone we are to take as first things in education tools and information and skills, leaving the analysis and the formation of purposes in a secondary and rather hazy position.

Nevertheless, we cannot stop here. It can be shown that we have still to consider some of the prime essentials of education for well-living. But, for our encouragement, let me hasten to say that what remains is not so much a lot of added items as an interpretative and integrating principle that may even simplify rather than complicate what already seems so formidable.

III

SHALL WE ASSIGN TO THE EDUCATED MAN ANY SPECIFIC FUNCTION IN SOCIETY?

If it should turn out that any or all of our ten marks of the educated man can be found in persons who are moving in opposite directions in life; in those who count for progress and in those who count against progress in almost any matter of social interest; if, then, education, as it is conventionally understood, is made to appear thus external to the great issues of life and society, shall we not become dissatisfied with our standard on the ground of its ineffective conventionality?

What shall we say, for example, of the prevalence of dogmatisms of all sorts among persons of culture? We abound in dogmas, not only theological but also political, economic, industrial, educational—even contradictory dogmas in all these fields. Orthodoxy, heresy, excommunication, and all the minor deprivations that come short of excommunication, are rife among us in matters of state and in matters of business and industry. Ethical orthodoxy is scorned by an ethical heterodoxy that is likewise authoritarian and intolerant. Shall we, or shall we not, take this as a sign of the state of our education? No one, probably, will predict, from the mere fact that a man is educated (as education is conventionally understood), either that he will be found non-dogmatic or in which of the warring dogmatic camps he will be found!

How much this resembles the condition of our youth! They, too, are opinionated, partisan, dogmatic; they lack method in the approach to great problems. Are

they, perhaps, drawn along by the suction of mature dogmatisms? Are they and their elders alike victims, perhaps, of an education that in essential particulars does not educate?

Is it not true that numberless persons who are counted as educated are so absorbed in affairs of their own that they feel no particular interest in even the major problems of current society? Is it not true that many of these persons who occupy a privileged position in society make it their real, even if unavowed, life-work to consolidate and perpetuate special privilege? And ethical and religious seriousness is by no means absent in all such cases!

It appears that one can be educated in even the high sense described in our ten points and still be a hanger-on of society; one can be educated in this high sense and yet not apprehend the things that are of the greatest import to civilization itself!

What shall we say of a university professor who discovers or invents some secret instrument of destruction and puts it at the disposal of war-makers, believing that he is serving his mistress Science, his country, and his God? Let us not be hasty in what we say about him, for perhaps he is the offspring of the education that now is!

What shall we say of capitalists and employers, cultured according to recognized collegiate and professional standards, who believe in the finality of industrial methods that are dividing society into hostile camps, and bringing us daily nearer to bloody revolution?

What shall we say of religionists who, educated though they be, prescribe to history and science what

their findings shall be, set up partisan fences in spiritual things, and cannot be counted upon to add anything constructive to society in the large?

What is to be said of men in political life—legislators, executives, diplomats, judges—who have culture in the full sense that I have described, yet act as the agents neither of the whole people of to-day, nor of the future, but of party, class, or other narrow interest?

If we had a world full of men and women thus educated we should not have therein any assurance that these men and women would not permit the world to go to ruin. The world is sustained not by these things alone, but by these and others also. These other things must now be sought out and added to our notion of the *well*-educated man.

Thus far we have attributed to the educated man certain items of knowledge, certain skills (knowing how to do certain things or how to use certain tools, as language), and certain moral attitudes. But these are one and all either so general or so formal that they may be "possessed" by one who does not perform, or even understand, any really important function as belonging to him. We must go on, then, to ask what specific function does belong to an educated man as such.

Moreover, our discussion has not yet passed beyond the possibility of conceiving this as a static world, and the correlative possibility that an educated man might not be ready to do anything in the world but go 'round and 'round among things as they are and as they were. You know such persons of culture; they are all about us. They have the technic of the trained intelligence; they know much of the past and even of the present; many

of them have broad and discriminating tastes; they hold firmly to ethical standards; they reverence God; they are active in affairs that everybody approves; yet a million of them may come into life and pass out of it without changing the dully respectable level of the social circles in which they move, and without making the world a definitely better place for anybody.

A just ideal of education as a whole will make two assumptions in addition to those already formulated, namely: that this is and ought to be a changing social world, and that the prime function of educated men and women is to make appropriate social changes.

IV

EDUCATION SHOULD PRESERVE AND CULTIVATE, NOT NEGLECT OR SUPPRESS, THE NATURAL VARIABILITY OF YOUTH

The implications of the last paragraph are deeply revolutionary. The well-educated man, we are now saying in effect, retains in maturity the readiness of youth for making and enjoying changes, and his specific function is to make changes that are needed when they are needed. Measured by the assumptions of education generally, this is the rankest heresy. For what have schools been doing, on the whole, from the beginning but inducing the young to conform to adult society as they find it? The docile youngster, whether child or adolescent, has been from of old the youngster who accepts without protest what his elders tell him. The "good" child or adolescent has been the one who does not disturb his elders. Acquiescence in the *status quo*,

or at least reliance upon the wisdom of the past and of the generation that is soon to pass away—this is the old, accepted mark of the "steady" youth; he has been recognized as educated when he has shown ability and readiness to live upon the level of the generation of his parents.

Yet the health of society, the very life of civilization, depends upon making changes when they are needed. Somebody must *see* when a move is needed, what sort of move is needed, and how to go about it with the greatest prospect of effectiveness and economy. What better use is there for scientific and historical information than to give the mind a set toward such questions, and to furnish a part of the material for answering them?

Education, then, is to aim at variability in the student, a cultivated variability! The youth brings to high school and college the precious treasure of youth, a feeling that the world is not finished and done, but in the making, and that he himself is not finished and done, but in the making. He is hospitable to changes in the world and in himself. Right here, in the natural variability of youth, the possibility of a progressive civilization chiefly lies. In the human species, and in it alone, is there provision for voluntary variation, for foresighted progress, for evolution by the economical process of analysis, discrimination, and agreement, as against the wasteful processes of chance and of strife. And youth, itself changing from the relative irresponsibility of childhood to the self-guidance of maturity, is the ever-renewed organ of this part of the creative process.

What does education do with this infinitely precious gift of God? What ought education to do with it?

Answer for yourself. Do our high schools and colleges tend, on the whole, to keep alive the youth's readiness for variation? Do they cultivate his variability, or leave it impulsive, immature, narrow? Do they, perchance, rob him of his variability and make of him a piece of conventional furniture?

May it not be that what we have been calling an ailment of youth is in part just a natural and valuable variability that is bunglesome because it has been educationally neglected? Given the modern youth's new control of the forces of nature, his widened contacts with people, and his new liberties, new variations in conduct and method of life must result. But whether the new variations shall be individually wholesome and socially constructive depends not upon restraining variability but upon cultivating it. Thus, the faults of which we complain should become to us a guide not only toward a cure for these particular ailments but also toward the betterment of the social whole.

How shall we ever have a deliberate, thought-guided social evolution—as against perhaps revolution, certainly as against social floundering—unless our educational system, from the bottom to the top, is reorganized with reference thereto? And is it not clear that the key position to be won in such a reorganization is the experience of youth in high school and college? Within these institutions themselves, within their stated curriculum, scope must be found for youthful variability. Here is the place to form a habit of thoughtfully making such changes in oneself and in society as experience may show the need of. And here is the place to train the eyes to see needs. This is the way to produce citizens

who are open-eyed toward social needs, and not terrified at the costs of progress; citizens for whom life, whether of the individual or of the state, is not a repetition of even a worthy past; for whom success is not a mere adding of resource to resource, but an ever-living adventure in readjustment, a continuous participation with God in the creation of a better and better world. Is it irreverent toward God, or perhaps merely disrespectful toward our schools and colleges, to assume that in the divine plan of creation education is intended to be the brain and the heart of social variation?

V

HOW THE SPONTANEOUS VARIABILITY OF YOUTH MAY BECOME A CULTIVATED VARIABILITY

To cultivate the natural variability of youth in the direction just indicated, four things are necessary that are either absent or under-developed in our conventional schooling. To enumerate them will continue the diagnosis of the youth-situation of to-day as well as point the way toward amelioration.

1. A focalized and concrete ethical outlook. Why do I say "focalized and concrete," and not merely "ethical outlook"? Because of the current over-reliance upon generalized sentiments or ideals like patriotism, fair play, generosity, sympathy for suffering, and unselfishness, and particularly because what we now have to provide for is not the application of something old but the creation of something new. To this end there is needed not merely a road and a sign-post, but most of all a stimulus. Now, we get our greatest moral stimulus by

seeing moral actualities so keenly that we feel them. To inculcate general sentiments, even to suffuse them with the glow of love for God and loyalty to Jesus, is not, as history shows, to insure insight into the actualities of the *status quo*, much less reconstructive activity.

The reason for the social ineffectiveness of such merely generalized teaching of ideals or sentiments is psychologically understandable. When you inculcate a generalized sentiment or ideal you may, indeed, evoke an emotional glow, and you may even make this glow habitual or at least revivable. But the glow tends to become just a halo around a concept. It adds enjoyment to the concept, and readiness to have the concept repeated. But the only assured or generally probable result is what I have for many years called "atmospheric amiability," which manifests itself in easy things but has no grappling quality when major issues ought to come up. It lacks provision for looking ahead, seeing what sort of changes are needed, and taking the initiative in them; and it tends to substitute sentimental goodwill for vigorous action.

A focalized and concrete ethical outlook cannot be given by a professor to a student. It must be developed as the student's own habit of mind, and therefore by the student's own repeated act of seeing for himself what really is there in various situations. There is a touch of it in youths who are cynical and disillusioned, as also in youths who, just because they clearly see the unfinished parts of existence, obtain thereby their first inspiring glimpse of a possible Kingdom of God. This sort of concrete seeing should be indigenous to the classroom.

2. Knowledge of the structure, the processes, and the strains and conflicts of present society—such knowledge as introduces one to the issues that the next mature generation—the present student's own generation—must tackle. A knowledge of yesterday and of precedents, even the best precedents, is not enough; neither is knowledge of merely general principles of social organization and process. A young citizen of the United States needs to know social conditions, precedents, processes, and problems specifically of the United States, and specifically at the present moment. For the main part of his main job—the vocation of living—is years ahead of him, and it will be difficult enough to get down to date with his duties.

3. Vital knowledge is, of course, something more than mere information as to facts. The knowledge that is education includes judgment, critical judgment, upon facts. A youth is not well-educated until he has had practice in the critical valuation of the institutions and the ways of the society of which he is a part. He must have practice in making his own judgments; his teachers cannot possibly do this for him, though they can spur him to judge his own judgments. Twenty years hence, when the student comes to the peak of his responsibilities, not only will he not have his old teachers as guides, but he will have to face problems that neither he nor they can now define or even guess. The only conceivable way in which the student can get ready for independent judgment then is by practising independent judging now and securing correction for his errors before they become too costly.

The young person needs to learn, too, that the habit

of critical social judgment is not the habit of fault-finding, but the recognition of virtues as well as of defects, together with the causes of both. Thinking for oneself does not mean "cockiness" or "going it alone," for this early practice in making judgments will take place in groups in which mutual criticism, a part of it from older heads, will be plentiful. One's student days are precisely the time when one should secure abundant experience of mutuality in forming judgments, which implies the experience of having one's most critical judgments criticised and refined.

4. This criticised practice in individual variation will fully ripen only when it includes experience in making social changes as well as devising them. The educated youth (in the full sense that we now have adopted) is one who, over and above all that has been described thus far, has actually carried the responsibility of making changes in some significant social sphere, and has faced the consequences of his acts. Here, again, I assume that these acts and experiences have been shared acts and experiences—shared with fellow students, with teachers, with the authorities of the church, with community groups and authorities. How can we possibly count as well-educated any man or woman who never has taken any significant part in the final determination of the social conditions and the educational conditions under which he or she lives? A baby in arms is not a fitting crest for a college or a high school. The idea that one begins life after one gets one's education is not only absurd, it is socially destructive.

CHAPTER IV

WHY DOES NOT RELIGION SUPPLY THE MISSING FACTOR?

According to our angle of approach, the great fault of modern youth is superficiality and externality; or lack of organization; or lack of standards and scales of value; or lack of intelligently discriminated purposes. We have summarized the whole situation as lack of education in the vocation of living. Accordingly, our whole discussion has trodden close to the edge of religion, which (whatever else it does) endeavors to solve the problem of the meaning of life, and to furnish inclusive principles for judging life's experiences and values. Why, then, has not religion supplied the missing factor? Where has the slip occurred between youth and religion?

Surely, when religion undertakes to educate, it may be expected to demonstrate in action the meaning of "well" in "well-educated." We need not ask to what proportion of the young population the churches have had access or might have had it, for their academies and colleges, taken in conjunction with their Sunday schools and young people's societies, show what religion has been about. And they show that religious organizations have not been bent upon education in any such manner as could meet the needs of modern youth. This is so generally recognized in the circle of those who think about religious education as scarcely to need proof; but in fact proof will accumulate as we proceed. The important

question is, How comes it to be so? Has some unavoidable calamity occurred that in the nature of the case causes a spiritual back-set for a time? Or has religion been made drowsy by some internally secreted toxin? Perhaps religion itself has been sick from the very same disease that we have found, first in youth, then in mature society, and then in education generally.

It would be easy to misunderstand what is intended in the notion that perchance our religion itself is sick. It certainly does not imply any accusation that ministers, teachers, and administrators have been irreligious, or insincere, or lacking in industry. For it is possible for one to be heartily religious without being awake to the desirable significance of religion for education and for society. One's piety can be genuine and yet have within its vitals an unsuspected lack or even disease.

On the other hand, the suggestion that perhaps our religion has been secreting a toxin that has made it drowsy leaves open the question whether this same religion might not develop from its own tissues an antitoxin that should bring back health and vigor. This is, in fact, my own view of our situation. The Christian religion itself is ailing, and this is the reason why it has not been ready to meet the new needs in education; but the healing that we require will proceed from a further use and especially a further development of certain factors that are in our religion and have been there from the days of Jesus.

No uncharitable judgments concerning religious leaders need be involved, much less any disloyalty to an ancient faith, if we now endeavor, with utter frankness, to state some of the limitations and defects of the Chris-

tian religion as it has been understood and practised during, say, the last two generations.

I

A GREAT AND WHOLESOME TRUTH HAS BEEN WITHHELD FROM THE MASSES, THOUGH IT HAS BEEN KNOWN TO HISTORICAL SCHOLARS—THE TRUTH THAT OUR RELIGION IS STILL IN THE MAKING

The variability of youth—a growing religion; this is the natural contact that has been largely missed. Our faith was not made and finished nineteen hundred years ago. Probably Jesus himself never thought of such a possibility. Rather, the writer of the Fourth Gospel expressed his spirit by attributing to him these words: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." The writer of this Gospel goes as far as to say that the incarnation of God that is in Jesus is to be continued through the ages in his disciples.

It is a matter of simple historic fact that we do not reproduce the religious life of apostolic days; that we do not copy Reformation piety; that under the ancient phrases of our faith there flows a stream of changing experiences and duties. Even Roman Catholicism has a history, an internal as well as an external history. For example, the Vatican decree of papal infallibility was argued and adopted within the period covered by my own memory.

The more religious way to make changes in religion is to do it with open eyes and from conviction, following critical judgment of the need. And how can making such changes be anything less than a duty? The duty

of observing the changing needs of our changing humanity; the duty of determining whether the modes of life that have been handed down to us can meet these needs; the duty of going forward to meet new needs instead of being forced to act by the consequences of neglect. If we do not do this, what happens? Drifting; drifting within whatever religion we have. Here is the spiritual law: You must go forward to meet the need, thus modifying yourself through your new duty, or you will be modified anyway by a spiritual drowsiness that will pervade your unused powers.

The masses of Christians have not been instructed from any such standpoint as this. To them Christianity is not plastic or growing. Scholars and leaders who have this point of view do not realize that it should be communicated to the people as a whole and become a guide for their growth in religious experience. Apparently these scholars and leaders do not realize that the impact of the age upon our religion occurs chiefly, not through scholarship, but through the daily experience of the masses. Daily experience with new conditions and new modes of living produces, either sensibly or insensibly, new meanings, new interpretations, new standards—a modified religion.

Thus it came to pass that our religion endeavored, for the most part, to work within the assumptions of modern industrialism and modern nationalism instead of challenging these assumptions. While our people supposed that they were preserving a faith once for all delivered to the saints, their faith was insensibly being modified into conformity with the new industrial and political order. Because the leaders in education failed

to see this and to make of school and college experience an introduction to religious adventure, the inexorable alternative took place—religion itself drifted even within institutions of learning founded in the name of religion. It became an aside—a polite and respectable amiability that could not be relied upon to meet any of the major problems of our present civilization.

This drifting, once permitted, brought our young people into a fog not only concerning new issues but also concerning older, more obvious Christian principles. For example, the ancient distinction between the standards of conventional society and the standards of the disciple of Jesus has been blurred. The Christian conscience, which seeks to know duty by reflecting upon the will of God as it is revealed in Jesus, tends to disappear. Nearly 300 students in a denominational university were asked whether our industry is organized on a fundamentally Christian basis. They divided almost evenly, 143 thinking that our self-seeking system is fundamentally Christian, 137 thinking that it is not. The same students were requested to give their judgment upon these two propositions: "When war is declared, the churches should be at least as ready as other community forces to rally to the support of the government," and "When the very life of the nation is threatened, the conscience of the individual should conform to the necessities of national defence." Did these young people see that the churches and individuals have a higher authority to consider than the public opinion or the state policy of the moment? To the first of these propositions 217 students assented, while 62 dissented from it. The second proposition won the assent of 206, while 70 dissented.

Suppose that these same students thought of our religion as still in the making, and of themselves as possible builders forward of it. They would have had a motive for questioning what our religion really does stand for; they would have had some curiosity as to what our religious past has been; they would have perceived distinctions that now utterly escape them. In short, youth is religiously dull because the natural variability of youth is not given adequate conscious scope in work upon the living problems of a living, growing religion.

The next factor in the situation of which mention will be made concerns specifically the colleges and academies that were founded in the name of the Christian religion. Later a word will be in order concerning religion in state universities.

II

FEW, IF ANY, DENOMINATIONAL COLLEGES AND ACADEMIES TAKE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TO BE THEIR PRIMARY FUNCTION

They have conceived their function to be that of giving a general education under conditions favorable to the religious life, or else that of keeping students religiously steady while they are getting a general education. Religion and education have been kept side by side; they have not coalesced as religious education.

Any one can easily test this sweeping judgment. If religious education were first in the thought of administrators, the budgets would be different, the curriculum would be different, the so-called "religious exercises" would be different. If religious education were the first concern, the existing state of the world and its needs,

the existing state and work of the churches, the processes and laws of the spiritual life, and the history of our religion would be more in evidence in both curriculum and budgets. If religious education were first, students would have opportunity for training in the main work of laymen in the churches, and we should hear far less complaint that the colleges send the young people back to their churches uninterested in church work. If religious education were first, administrators would not be as slow as they are to back thorough study of the Bible. Educators in religion would not put the religious guidance of students into the hands of untrained, unsupervised leaders in voluntary student associations; nor would educators in religion imagine that required attendance at chapel or at church, or perchance an occasional revival, can do any large part of the work.

No, the denominational academies and colleges do not accept religious education as their main function. Why do they not? A complete answer to this question would have to include nearly everything that was said in Chapters II and III, and in addition reference would have to be made to a point yet to be touched, namely, the influence of state education. For the moment let us consider only the influence of certain religious presuppositions upon denominational academies and colleges. This is a large subject, too large for adequate treatment here; yet certain phases of it can readily be indicated.

This, then, seems to be the truth in a nutshell: The administrators of these academies and colleges have for two generations had before their eyes a vital contrast between religious traditions, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, scientific knowledge of the world and

the Bible, together with the growth of new social needs and ideals. Here was a situation in which something needed to be done to and with our religion—a situation in which something inevitably was going to be done. Educational institutions are the places to which we should look for initiative and leadership in making and supporting the necessary moves. These institutions, working through their alumni, laymen as well as ministers, should be formers of religious public opinion. The new knowledge of the Bible, the new outlook upon man's place in nature, the new developments in the social ideals of life and of religion, and new developments in church work—all these should be mediated to the laity at large by leaders, lay and clerical, who have learned them in the academies and colleges.

We need hardly ask whether the academies and colleges have thus mediated religious changes to the people at large. The present touchiness with respect to changes; the controversies over matters that were settled by scholarship long ago; the efforts to turn back education in the natural sciences; the intensification of partisanship—these speak too loudly of the lack of leadership.

Why have not educators in denominational institutions seen the possible relation of education to popular religion? The influence of the purse has counted, of course; the growth of state education has had an effect upon denominational institutions; educators are more or less under the spell of the spirit of the times. But beyond all this, and more influential than all of it, is the fact that the administrators of denominational institutions acted under the assumption that our religion is not in the making but was made and finished millenniums

ago; that salvation is a matter of an individual's private relation to God, and not also and with equal directness a matter of the relation of organized industrial and political society to God's children; that religion is a matter of the heart, and does not require much religious intelligence; and that, as a consequence of all this, the main religious duty of the academies and colleges is to offer to students incentives for being religious in the already conventional ways.

In a true, deep, and almost tragic sense it may be said that what ails our religious academies and colleges is their religion! Not merely lack of religion, but also lack in the religion that they have. Lack of religious problems, lack of living thought, lack of initiative and creative urge, lack of divine discontent in a world in which the spirit of the Divine is, "Behold, I make all things new!" Because educators have not believed that education, even of the laity, is responsible for such things, we cannot count upon the men and women who have been educated here, even though they be members of churches, to see the changing needs of God's kingdom upon earth, much less to take prompt steps to meet the needs. And—here is the main point—this is not the way to make youth feel that religion is real, urgent, inspiriting.

III

THE GROWTH OF STATE EDUCATION HAS STIMULATED DENOMINATIONAL ACADEMIES AND COLLEGES TO IMITATE STATE INSTITUTIONS INSTEAD OF DEVELOPING DISTINCTIVE EXCELLENCES

The remarkable growth of public high schools and State colleges and universities during the last two gen-

erations has not been paralleled by the development of a higher religious culture. For the masses of her young people, the church provides a Sunday school and a young people's society; for the few she provides academies and colleges and universities. It is safe to say—and it is not censorious—that in none of these is the vocation of living dealt with as seriously as the State deals with "secular" studies.

Moreover, the growth of State secondary and higher education has had a decided effect upon church academies and colleges. The administrators of these institutions, struggling to secure voluntary gifts, have had to see State institutions drawing by taxation upon the purse of the whole commonwealth; they have had to see great libraries, laboratories, faculties, differentiation of departments, paid for by taxation; they have had to see students offered all this without tuition fees. No wonder that these administrators felt the difficulty of providing facilities that would attract students even in the presence of all these free opportunities provided by the State. So, effort was directed, on the whole, to competing with State institutions on their own ground. Departments were multiplied; vocational studies in teaching, in business, and in commerce were added, also prevocational studies in law and in medicine. These will serve as examples of the sort of pressure that was most felt.

Though no fault need be found with any one of these items taken by itself, they may nevertheless in their totality represent a policy that requires cautious scrutiny. What we see happening here is competition with State institutions upon the basis of secular standards in-

stead of competition between a religious and a secular standard. In particular, we behold these religious institutions putting their weight upon subjects of instruction and prospective occupations taken conventionally rather than as revalued by the religious consciousness. Hence even here the vocation of living is not the backbone of the educational policy.

Thus religion was pushed into a corner by the pressure of State education. The fact is as natural as it is deplorable. How could a college president give thought to religious progress and to the revaluation of education when he had to raise a million for new buildings and new departments? There were plenty of risks in his situation already; how could we expect him to lead a faculty in the venture of reorganizing the whole plan of a college?

One would like to answer: This was the supreme opportunity of religion to show what it is and what it can do in society when it permeates the whole plan and structure of education. This was the time when, at last, religion and education should have been fused into one in the Christian academy and college. The principle of such a fusion, let me repeat, is not at all the paralleling of conventional studies with religious exercises and studies, but the organization of the whole plan of study about the functions of a man and of society. Finding out what men are doing, what is worth doing, what improvements in society are needed, and how the most worth-while things can be most economically achieved—in short, analysing, criticising, planning, and experimenting with the vocation of living in its various aspects—this should be the heart and the brain of the whole.

This is the ground upon which we should have competed with State institutions in a most friendly and constructive rivalry. Not merely "should have," but should here and now. Dawdling, lack of intellectual interests, immersion in student affairs of minor or doubtful value, secularism verging upon paganism—these are present in our denominational institutions. Here, as in the State institutions, there is inertia with respect to the biggest things that the men and women of the next generation have to do. Ignorance of our religion—its documents, its history, its practices, its ideals, its next tasks—abounds. The churches desperately need laymen who will provide intelligent backing for religious education; the times demand men of active, intelligent, courageous good will who know enough of society and of its needs to lead forward.

What light does all this throw upon the youth situation of to-day? First of all, it helps account for the fact that so little difference is felt between young people who are under the influence of church institutions and other young people. The vocation of living is neglected all round. In the next place, we find here reason to ask whether the young people whom we think of as neglectful of religion are not, as a matter of fact, taking it at pretty much its own valuation of itself. If the local Sunday school or young people's society does not take religious education seriously; if in the denominational academies and colleges religion is pushed into a corner; if those who have grown up under religious auspices are not rebuilders of the human world, what should we expect the masses of our young people to think of religion?

IV

RELIGIOUS FOUNDATIONS AT STATE UNIVERSITIES MAY OR MAY NOT MAKE A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF A HIGHER RELIGIOUS CULTURE

Multitudes of the sons and daughters of the churches flock to the State colleges and universities. The problem of what is to be done for and with them has begun to be felt, and this feeling gives us at least a glimmer of light. In general the answer that is taken for granted is that provision should be made by the religious forces themselves for definite religious fellowship and worship, for definite religious activities, and for the systematic study of religion. Such a scheme, even when fully developed, might find itself in the position of a mere adjunct of education that has its controlling centre elsewhere. Nevertheless, the opportunity to begin at the beginning and, without hampering precedents, to plan specifically for education in the vocation of living, is an alluring one. Let us, then, notice some of the conditions of success, or at least of the highest success.

1. It is taken for granted that the religious foundations will be financially and administratively independent of the State institutions, though affiliated with them, as by the granting of credit for studies pursued. But whence shall the financial resources be derived, and who shall organize and administer these foundations? At the present moment we witness a rather strong drive to keep everything in denominational hands. To this end imposing buildings are being erected and staffs of workers employed, the whole directed toward the maintenance of what is essentially a student denominational

church. The admiration that one feels for such enterprise is tempered by doubts about the horizon of the design. Is the objective, as well as the machinery, denominational? Is the purpose to hold the young people to the church, or to contribute toward the remaking of our semi-pagan civilization? Conceivably even a denominational foundation might make itself, like John the Baptist, a forerunner and announcer of something greater than the denomination. The test will be readiness for co-operation when no specific denominational advantage is in sight, the scope and character of the studies provided, and the breadth and depth of the human meaning that is given to religious devotion.

2. Much will depend upon whether the studies offered focus upon the maintenance of a religious tradition, or upon the remaking of our human world. Let us have study of the Bible and of religious history, by all means; but let this pour its results into a study of the proper work of religion in our world. The layman should return to his home ready to take a layman's part in promoting religious education, for example; and he should have such practice in seeing social facts, judging them from the Christian point of view, and understanding social processes and movements that he will be neither blind nor contented toward our materialistic society, nor unpractical in his protests against it.

3. Not less profound than either of these conditions of the highest effectiveness is a third condition. Shall the religious foundations at State institutions bestow upon students finished gifts (prescribed knowledge, an authoritative faith, a fixed ecclesiastical habit) or stimulate students to find out their own needs and the needs

of the world? Shall the management be of the "overhead" type? Shall we estimate success by students' conformity? Or shall we trust freedom and youth's reaction to opportunity for variation? I am inclined to regard this condition of high success as the most important of all. Unless we can bring ourselves to tell students that our religion is still in the making, that it partakes of our faults, and that each generation of youths has the privilege of entering into it with free creativity, we simply cannot reach the depths of youth.

I have spoken more largely than I should desire to do concerning the ailments of our religion, and less largely concerning remedies. On the whole, however, the nature of the required remedies has appeared in the analysis of defects and the causes thereof. The immediately hard, almost baffling, problem is, How can these obviously necessary processes of reform be set going? I shall not be unkind to the administrators of education if I say that, in the nature of their situation, creative acts such as are now required can be expected from very few of them. The creative spirit, which alone can do the work, will make its appearance in power first in unofficial circles, possibly among the humble, possibly among the young! Is the workers' education movement in Great Britain and the United States, perhaps, a sign of the coming of the new spirit in education? Do we behold another sign in the various schemes for enabling plain people to study and think about the Christian way of life as it is related to present society—the Information Service of the Federal Council of Churches, for example; likewise the *Bulletin* of the Methodist Federation for

Social Service, and the inquiries set going by the National Conference on the Christian Way of Life? Above all, what shall we expect from the tendency shown by youths here and there to ask questions about their own education? In more than one institution students are pushing their professors toward more vital teaching. In some cases they are seeking to make a list of the things that they really need to learn while they are in college. Students are saying that something is wrong with the world, and that our conventional approaches to this world through religion and through education are inadequate. Students are beginning, even, to inquire into the dynamics of college administration. What does all this signify? It will require another chapter to give an answer.

CHAPTER V

WHAT SHALL WE DO WITH OUR CRITICAL YOUTH?

The youthful faults that furnished the starting point for our discussion, though they are in evidence in the preponderant mass of our young people, do not characterize all of them, by any means. A minority, statistically small, but outspoken, forceful, and bent upon action, is making trouble in another quarter. While the many give themselves with little thought to the surface of life's opportunities, being both modern and conventional at the same time, the few stand apart and endeavor to look beneath the surface.

Beneath the surface they think they see grounds for doubting much that others take for granted—grounds for doubting not only conventional modernity but, likewise, much of the supposed wisdom of the past. They not only doubt; they challenge, and, believing in their own practicality, they are pushing for unprecedented measures. Is trouble brewing here for the established order of things in the state, in the church, in the economic and industrial order, and in social relations generally? It behooves us to understand this youthful ebullition.

Material descriptive of the youth movement is so abundant that there is no occasion here for detailing the history and the external marks of this almost world-

wide awakening.[1] But interpretation is in order. Is what we witness just youthful obstreperousness? Or, perhaps, youthful unpracticality taking itself to be high idealism? Or is it, possibly, a manifestation through youth of some deep-lying condition in our contemporary civilization? Moreover, what is the proper place of youth, and what the proper place of age, in the organization of life? Let us attempt a diagnosis.

I

WHAT AILS OUR CRITICAL YOUTH?

Many things may or may not ail them, but the first overwhelmingly significant fact about them is that they are endeavoring to think for themselves. That the particular thoughts that have come to them—say, out of the War—are wise, or perchance unwise, is not the most important matter. For underneath and within each of their convictions is the assumption of a changed relation between youth and age. Tradition says, Age for thought, youth for action—under the guidance of this thought. But the aggressive minority among our young people boldly take youth to be a time for both thought and action.

If this assumption should become established and customary in our society, it might produce, it probably would produce, one of the most momentous changes to

[1] For the present purposes it will be sufficient to refer to the following books:

Youth and Renaissance Movements. New York: Council of Christian Associations, 1923.

Stanley High, *The Revolt of Youth.* New York: Abingdon Press, 1923.

Through the Eyes of Youth: National Conference of Methodist Students. New York: Abingdon Press, 1924.

which a date can be assigned. For social action would rest upon a different basis, and it would be judged in a different mood. The adoption of manhood franchise, and then the enfranchisement of women, did not modify the ancient tradition of the special prerogative of maturity. Education, even in societies that most approximate democracy, assumes, on the whole, that the thinking that is appropriate for youth is practice-thinking in preparation for maturity, not thinking that performs the full function of independently judging and concluding as a phase of decision and action, especially in fundamental matters.

Practice-thinking has been of two sorts: Mental gymnastics, which is supposed to develop intellectual agility; and mental assimilation of the thoughts of others, which is supposed to lay the foundations of wisdom. College debating represents the first, or gymnastic, type; classroom discussions the second, or wisdom-absorbing, type. What we now behold is youth stepping beyond practice-thinking into real thinking. The problems are not set by some one else, but found by the young people themselves; no extraneous goal, as academic standing or popular applause or the decision of a committee of judges, controls the process. This thinking is conscious of itself as a genuine wrestling with reality and a genuine entering into responsibilities with a purpose of one's own. What will be the general result if such thinking on the part of youth becomes a customary thing? Nothing less than an increase in the variability of our whole social organization. Society will become more plastic, experimentation will be more free, change will take place as a matter of course.

All the risks of thinking are here, of course. The

first of them, perhaps, is dilettanteism, or reflection which, expending its sense of importance upon itself, stops short of the labor of responsible action, with the tests that it brings. Dilettanteism may take a sentimental turn, sympathizing with the woes or glorying in the virtues of humanity; or it may take the form of apathy or disdain with respect to what men count as serious interests. A second danger is the fault-finding spirit in one or another of its forms—either as depression, or as censoriousness, or as "disillusionment"—itself perhaps illusory. A third danger is lack of thoroughness—seeking short-cuts, taking partisan slogans and dogmas as reasons, arguing conclusions instead of amassing data. But these, one and all, are risks of the thought-life as such, not specific dangers of youthful initiative and freedom in thinking.

It will be said, in addition, that youth is rash; draws hasty conclusions, rushes into action with half-baked plans. Granted; but is not the same true of maturity? The fact that certain conclusions have been drawn by the mature does not prove that these conclusions themselves are rationally mature. "By their fruits ye shall know them." Where, then, is the mature thinking today in political, international, economic, industrial, and religious matters? Surely it is not found in the mature heads of those who not only are not getting us out of our troubles but are leading us into worse ones. The point is that the age of a thinker is an immaterial circumstance. There is wisdom, and there is foolishness, all up and down the line between childhood and advanced age.

Who shall say whether the greater rashness in

thought and action is to be attributed to our critical youth or to our mature leaders? The older generation, having got pricked in its endeavor to gather grapes from thorns, says: "I will get those grapes by reaching farther into the thorn-tree and by grabbing more quickly." Is not this rashness? What is more precipitate in all history than the haste with which the leaders now in control, with the acquiescence of the people, have assumed that the evils produced and revealed by the Great War are to be avoided in the future by following the same motives and pursuing the same nationalistic policies that brought on the War? In the major concerns of our civilization—in state, in church, in industry—have we, the mature, been really apt to learn from history? Have we cautiously looked to see where our real successes and our real failures lie? Have we withheld action until it could be rationally justified? Our fault is almost precisely that which we attribute to youth: We rashly approve and imitate the past, especially ourselves, while critical youth rashly commits itself to the unprecedented.

At one point, at least, these critical youths are pursuing the essentially conservative method of reason itself: They are endeavoring to be realistic toward facts, and to assess values from a broadly human standpoint rather than from the prejudiced standpoint of individual or partisan interest. Whereas, even a world-calamity and the threat of world-destruction do not jar our leaders into realistic thinking; whereas, in high observation-posts the actualities of the War and of the settlement are blinked, and the entrapping meshes of a selfish and self-willed nationalism are not even perceived, the eyes of our critical youths are seeing beyond every national and

racial horizon. They, more than any other present-day group probably, reflect the ancient saying: "Nothing that is human is to me foreign."

What shall we do with such youths? First of all, listen to them! Listen, not as to some freakish novelty; listen, not as to an enemy whom we would entrap in his own words; listen, not as to a new and better authority, but as to fellow-travellers and explorers who may possibly see in the environment what we have not yet seen, who may possibly remind us of something in the path already traversed that we are ignoring, who may possibly realize the difficulties ahead and strengthen our courage to meet them. What outlook, then, is coming to our young people?

II

HOW DOES OUR CIVILIZATION LOOK TO THE EYES OF CRITICAL YOUTH?

On the whole, the criticism of modern life that emanates from youth is a criticism of the ends that we pursue. What I have called in this essay "the vocation of living" is the chief interest of the youth movement. The simple joys of robust health, open air, the beauty of nature, folk-song and festival, sincerity of speech, unvarnished good fellowship; free intelligence, and the development of the capacity of all for making and creating; art as daily food rather than as a mere appendage of the common life; the utilization of science, not to enhance the profits of the few but to enlarge the life of all; government, not in the interest of a race or of a class but of humanity as such; world-peace, not as an equilibrium of selfish interests maintained by fear but

as a possible world-fellowship and world-co-operation—these are the goals toward which the movement tends, one goal being emphasized by this group, another by that. Where the movement is consciously religious it aims at such things as freedom and beauty in worship; freedom, sincerity, and frankness in matters of belief; and the application here and now of the ancient principle of good-will and seeking first the Kingdom of God.

As I write this list, a paradoxical situation unfolds itself. Most persons would assent to the validity of these aims, yet the validity of them is the point at issue—and the issue is an intense one—between current civilization and the youth movement. How can this be? Youth itself gives the answer when it points out how the institutions that we have created come between us and our good intentions; how the leaders to whom we commit broad interests yield to the pressure of narrow interests; how we do not hold our chosen leaders to the tasks to which we assign them; and how, in general, we avoid paying the costs of our avowed principles. In effect, if not in intent, we are reminded how insincere our civilization has become.

To the eyes of these youths it appears that, on the whole, our civilization, our religion included, is devoting its energies to minor ends, though major ends be professed and in a sense intended; that the values that we do achieve—from bread to education—are narrowly distributed, the basis not being humanity, but race, class, or sheer economic power; that real freedom, though the term be on our lips, is prevented by narrowness of opportunity, by defective education, by economic pressure, and by governmental action; that where we think we are

following principles, we have drifted into servitude to the machinery that we have created; that religion itself has become institutionalized, unprophetic, and self-deceived. In view of all this, the leaders of the world's affairs are judged to be blind, partisan, and unready to learn from history and experience. Education, as it is generally administered, is regarded as not doing its normal and proper part to prevent these things. It gives insufficient encouragement to individuality, initiative, real thinking and judgment, and creativeness; it fails to assimilate the implications of freedom, and as a consequence prepares us to endure instead of correct the blunders of our leaders; finally, it has not made adequate provision for leading us out of partisanship, class-divisions, and provincialism into an efficient humanitarianism.

This is the way that our civilization looks to the eyes of many an awakened youth. We shall greatly misunderstand the stir that is abroad if we fancy that it is just an emotional reaction from the strain and suffering of the War. For it is also a thought-movement that examines the foundations of what we have cherished—rather thoughtlessly, perhaps—as civilization. In particular, it endeavors to judge this civilization by the ends that it pursues, and by the actual condition of human life, rather than by the elaborateness, precision, or power of its machinery.

What shall we say to this? Probably our first reaction is emotional—a reaction, too, toward these youths rather than toward what they say. In order, therefore, to be able to weigh their words, we shall need to deal with this emotional tendency in ourselves.

III

SHALL NOT AGE LEARN FROM YOUTH AS WELL AS YOUTH FROM AGE? RATHER, SHALL NOT YOUTH AND AGE LEARN TOGETHER?

If, when thoughtful youth speaks, we stop our ears; if we isolate these youths, saying in spirit: "Smarties! Let's see you do these big things that you prate about!" yes, even if we pat these youths on the back, and tell them that their idealism is very creditable to them, but do not endeavor to *think with* them—if we allow our sense of the superiority of maturity to govern us, then we shall rob ourselves and future society of an incalculably precious asset. Youthful energy, ready to focus itself upon the most important concerns of the world, energy that to-morrow will be mature, will be dissipated, or it will turn to minor, conventional ends; and we, the mature, shall lose a stimulus that will do us good if we will let it play upon us. What is needed just now is thinking and learning *together*. Whether this occurs or not will depend chiefly upon the emotional factor that inheres in our tradition of the superiority of maturity, and only secondarily upon the corresponding emotional factor in the assumptions of these youths.

Let us who are mature commune with ourselves. There is an almost universal assumption, more tacit than expressed, that authority should be withheld from the young about as long as possible; and along with this goes the further assumption that youth is to learn from age but not age from youth. Do these assumptions spring from the nature of things or, rather, from the

forms of social organization and of social experience that have prevailed in the past? I am inclined to answer, From the latter altogether. Given a society based upon force rather than consent, it will follow in the natural order of motives that the helplessness of childhood will be taken advantage of—as far as authority is concerned—as long as possible. Given a privileged ruling class, the maintenance of privilege will be felt to depend upon keeping the more variable part of the population, the young, as quiet as possible. Given a popular government by party, with self-interest or class-interest as the basis of division, the party managers will act as do the leaders of a privileged class. But to the extent that society is organized in the interest of the common good, and chooses its means by scientific types of analysis, the attitude of teachableness supplants that of dogmatic assertion. To find what is the common good, the feelings of all are taken into account; to find the best means and methods, light is humbly sought from any one who can shed even one ray. Then the way opens for real co-operation between all the powers of youth and all the powers of maturity, and this will include fellowship in learning and thinking as well as in action.

If I were a despot, bent upon maintaining my own arbitrary power, I should appoint old men as my advisers, and I should endeavor to prevent youths from opening their eyes or their mouths. If I were the leader of a privileged class, I should keep the youths in subjection by offering them opportunity for action and for gain without critical thought. But if I were called upon to assist our young and struggling democratic movement to know itself, to know the conditions of its future

health and growth, and to dedicate itself without reserve to utterly human ends, I should summon to my help the implacably realistic eyes of our critical youth; I should seek to be baptized into their zeal for doing the difficult thing; I should give them scope for action, and it would be my policy to transfer responsibilities to them as rapidly as possible, not as reluctantly as possible.

This policy would imply a profound change in our traditions as to the relations between teacher and learner. We almost universally assume that the young are to learn from the old, whereas the point of view that now is suggested assumes that the teacher and the taught shall together learn from reality itself; that the young shall go, with their teachers, to the sources, and that these shall be judged together; and that action shall flow directly from appreciation of the sources rather than imitatively from the older generation. Co-operation, a two-sided co-operation, in a realistic and ever-renewed critical inspection of life in its actuality, and co-operation in a new mastery of its unused resources—this is the better relation between youth and age.

It requires upon the part of the mature some abatement of their ancient assumption that they are the source, or the repository, or even the guardians, of wisdom. The scientific man, says Huxley, "sits down before fact as a little child." In the sciences, the learned are the humble; why should it be otherwise in the matter of social guidance? In fact, is not the realism of our critical youth an approach to the scientific spirit in respect to the values of life? And is not the mature leadership that we now have almost fatally lacking in this spirit?

There is a conceit of youth, and there is a conceit of age. Youth overvalues its raw power, age overvalues its own habits. The corrective for both is objectivity, which is possible only through the policy of ever-renewed free criticism carried on co-operatively. Such a policy will make a place for a new virtue of the mature—confession and repentance. For maturity, as well as youth, is hasty, makes blunders, indulges inferior motives, is intense where it should be broad, entraps itself in bad habits. The leaders of the people are nowise exempt from these things. Why, then, do not we of the older generation practise confession and repentance? Why do we not assume that with us, as with youth, life is experimental; that it is exploration, not mere repetition, and that the most prompt perception and acknowledgment of our errors is the shortest and least painful road toward any worth-while goal? Why should we not assume that shunning the light is evidence that our deeds are evil?

The first condition, then, of adding the full resources of youth to the working capital of society is, on the part of us mature persons, the humility of the learner, together with the spirit of co-operation.

What, now, would be the effect upon youths who discovered this attitude in us? Would it make them more cocky, rash, and unpractical? Let any one who has made the experiment answer. Does anything whatever so sober a youth and make him capable of working in harness as having a co-operative part with his elders in studying and determining important affairs? Not isolation, not stratification, not teaching on the one side and learning on the other, but mutual learning, mutual

striving, mutual acknowledgment of faults, and mutual repentance—this is the way of social health and growth.

This will involve on our part consent to reopen questions that we have regarded as closed. The foundations of our moral standards are no exception; let them be freely re-examined, with the possibility—the probability—that rebuilding will be necessary. This is dangerous, of course, but no plan of action can be free from danger, least of all (I am tempted to say) the uncritical following of conventional morality. Is it not queer, in fact, that we, acknowledgedly faulty beings, can feel ourselves morally safe when we do not continually re-examine our standards?

IV

HAS MATURITY ANYTHING BETTER TO OFFER THAN YOUTH'S APPROACH TO CERTAIN OF THE MOST PERSISTENT AND DIFFICULT PROBLEMS OF SOCIETY?

In the interest of a co-operative response to youth's challenge, and as evidence that youth has something worth while to say, I make bold to ask whether the men of my generation are making any wiser approach to two or three of our hardest tasks than the approaches that are being made by the generation that is only nearing maturity.

One of the simpler cases may be taken first, that of going about the uniting of two religious bodies that went apart eight decades ago over the slavery question. For years and years the mature leaders of the Methodists North and the Methodists South have wrestled with the problem of unification. And how have they conceived the problem? As having to do with a set of dust-cov-

ered articles of belief, with administrative machinery and jurisdictions, and with adjusting relations between blacks and whites so that neither the Northern nor the Southern sensibility will be offended. The appropriateness and even necessity of these questions need not be denied, but it will be well to note the place they have in the general perspective. Note that the approach is not through the questions, What task have we to perform that requires us to unite? and How can we so unite as to get this task done? but, How shall we adjust ourselves to what we already are and what we already are doing?

The recent conference of Methodist college students at Louisville, a conference called by themselves and representative of both North and South, on the other hand, went at the problem of unification from the standpoint of the tasks confronting the Christian religion. Indeed, it was a consciousness of unfulfilled tasks that created an impulse to hold such a conference; and when the five hundred young people came together from their hundred colleges, behold, the awareness of a common task had already made them one; reunion was in essence already occurring then and there. From the standpoint of work to be done and the conditions of doing it, the conference then took up some specific questions of the terms of union.

Here we have, side by side, two ways of dealing with a large social situation. Maturity assumes that the essence of the problem is the adjustment of something in the *status quo* to something else in the *status quo;* youth assumes that the problem is to get something accomplished for which the *status quo* has proved itself

to be an inadequate medium. Christianity, said these youths, has enormous unfinished duties in relation to war and peace, race relations, human relations in industry, the forming of public opinion, the spread of Christ-likeness throughout the world; let us find and meet the conditions for doing these duties.

Which of these approaches is the more fundamental? Which the more likely even to produce administrative machinery that will work? Granted that the two are not necessarily opposed to each other, but rather complementary, is not the youthful approach the normative one? At least, can we do without it?

Let us turn, now, to the way in which our critical youth, who are in large measure the ones who display likewise the most faith in the future and the greatest readiness for costly action, have begun to think about the problem of peace and war. What is the most characteristic thing that these most aggressive youths have done? They make actual peace with one another! They begin by casting war out of their own souls, and having done this they reach the hand of understanding friendliness to similarly minded youth everywhere. German youth and French youth greet one another in this spirit at the very moment when their two countries are engaged in what seems like a death struggle. Chilean students send to Peruvian students a message of good will, and for this act they suffer humiliation and punishment at the hands of their fellow-citizens. Mexican students are hosts to an international student conference representative of more than a score of nationalities. American students make a vacation pilgrimage to Germany during which they live in intimacy with German youth,

and youths from Germany and other European countries are invited to tour the United States and make the acquaintance of American students. American students, hundreds and thousands of them (at Louisville and Indianapolis), face, and face down, the discriminations made in the United States against Orientals.

Next, in the light of this spiritual glow and of this already partly accomplished peace, these youths proceed to inquire into the causes of war and into the national and international measures that are making or not making for peace. As charity begins at home, so the young people at Indianapolis and Louisville examined into the forces that are making for war and for peace upon their own respective campuses. What is the actual—not theoretical—effect, they asked, of maintaining a Reserve Officers' Training Corps? Does it, or does it not, promote in students the spirit, the impulse, and the method of peace? As a national measure does it in reality represent preparedness for war or preparedness for peace? They asked likewise about the relation of economic forces to war and peace, and, being church members, they inquired what *their* churches could and should do in the cause of peace.

Finally, they analyzed the issues upon which citizens have to take one stand or another as individuals, and then these students openly took their stand in the presence of one another. There was no stampede, no herd-action; there were a majority, a minority, a middle-of-the-road, and a not-yet-decided group; and there was no ostracism of the minority, no hundred-per-centism.

Many of these students were heard from upon their return to their respective campuses. Reports were made;

student conferences on these big questions were held; there was agitation of the R. O. T. C. question; faculties were approached; and again individual students took their stand. A minority—only a handful as compared with the mass of American students—announced that for themselves individually they were done with fighting. The result, in various instances, was violent condemnation mixed with ridicule that is harder to bear than whips upon one's back. As I am not endeavoring to solve the war problem, but only to compare two general approaches to it, there is no occasion to say all that might be said in favor of the pacifist position, but it is appropriate to point out that the function of minorities is here properly in question. And I do not hesitate to say that neither in state nor in church is this function well understood or well performed. The first function of a minority is to make a real issue so clear that nobody can dodge it; and the second function is to stick to convictions through thick and thin, good-naturedly, of course, and not failing in co-operation where it is possible without surrender or compromise. The "herd-instinct" is intolerant of minorities that will not at least compromise, but they are essential to the progress of really popular government. We may well consider, then, whether these out-and-outers among the students are, or are not, fulfilling a part in a normal social procedure. In my opinion they are. Even if I regarded them as visionary rather than practical, I should defend them as citizens worthy of their citizenship.

Contemplating the whole of this student approach to peace and war, we find: (1) Objectivity toward facts; (2) A coming to close quarters with facts that are nearest

home; (3) An assumption that the problem has its centre in mental dynamics; (4) A weighing of administrative measures in terms of primary values or mental dynamics rather than in terms of administrative custom and assumption; (5) A recognition of individual responsibility and readiness to take up the hard task of a minority; (6) Respect for the position of others and ability to disagree in good spirit; (7) And, underneath the whole, a determination to pay any necessary cost that the elimination of war may involve.

Does not this compare well with the spirit, the assumptions, and the procedure, of any body or section of mature persons whatsoever? Let us not misunderstand the purport of this question, nor judge these youths by unfair tests. The question is not, Have they solved the problem so that, if we follow their plan, we shall surely arrive at permanent peace? but, Is their way of going at the matter one that leads toward a solution? Is it a more direct way, or a less direct one, than others? Does it put the emphasis in the right place? Do these youngsters merely mess things up, or is the movement of their thought and purpose toward light, order, and efficiency? At least, have they a real contribution to make?

How can any objective-minded person doubt that these youths can make a contribution, not only of raw power but also of intelligently directed power, toward the elimination of war? Perhaps the great reason why we have been so powerless to put our pacific intentions into effect is that we have left these capacities of our youths under-developed.

It is not necessary to trace the parallel procedure in

other matters, such as race relations, industrial relations, Christian missions, the formation of public opinion, and the reform of education. One finds here, naturally, aspiration that outruns both actual and proposed measures; one finds some imitative catching at phrases and policies; but against this and above it one notes hospitality to facts, a definite rising above class-interests, and readiness for even costly individual consecration.

V

WHAT IS THE PROPER PLACE OF CRITICAL YOUTH IN OUR SOCIETY?

It has been shown that, as far as these critical youths are concerned, the conditions are here for fruitful cooperation between youth and age, not only in action but also in the learning, the thinking, and the communal deliberation that should guide action. What shall we do with our critical youths, then? Make them full partners in the concern! Junior partners, of course; they will not aspire to be more when once their capacity has had opportunity to find for itself its limitations. And let us older heads remember that the chief danger that the young encounter is not any temptation to radicalism, but the soporific of conventionality. They imitate us too much, not too little; alas, that so few of them are aware of our faults! The best policy is to increase the number of critical youth as fast as we can.

EPILOGUE

MUST RELIGION GROW OLD?

This is the final question with regard to the outlook for youth. If religion must grow old and decrepit, then either it must find a way to conventionalize youth more and more, or else more and more youth will cast itself adrift. But in respect to conventionalism religion cannot compete with "worldliness"; a religion that is in process of fossilization tends to become a religion of old men. Least of all can such a religion appeal effectively to youths who have tasted the individual freedom of belief, worship, and conduct that modern society has achieved. Only a youthful religion can hold youth.

A youthful religion! This refers, not to periods of time, but to quality of life. It means manifold responsiveness to impressions and a corresponding manifold possibility of happiness. It means ability to see, feel, understand, and sympathize with the new; ability to transcend precedents, most of all religious precedents; in short, a religion that has within itself the impulse and the power to resist and correct its own institutionalism.

A youthful religion may be old in years; it may perhaps invest worship with ancient symbolism; it may guard against flightiness and flippancy; it certainly will seek for universal laws of life and for timeless good. But

it will be more than "up to date," for it will go ahead of the times in a never-relaxing criticism of the times, and it will be socially radical—that is, it will reject the half-gods of respectability, and it will demand unconventional, costly, self-sacrificing reconstructions.

But how can religion escape decrepitude? Our study of the faults characteristic of modern youth led us quickly to recognize them as faults of our age, not merely of the young; and we discovered that education, which assumes special responsibility in understanding and guiding the young, had failed to grasp certain conditions for the fulfilment of its function. Even education under religious auspices, we discovered, has missed some of the conditions of religious efficiency. It appeared that youth and maturity alike were being swept along by certain forces of the age instead of evaluating and controlling them. But in our last chapter we discovered something even more significant; we found, underneath the whole, an ancient and questionable assumption as to the proper place of youth in society. We concluded that, for the health of all concerned, youthfulness should become one of the constant factors in the whole of social control, and that this is possible only by giving to youth a new and more significant place in social organization.

Does this apply to religion? It is customary to regard religion as in its very nature conservative. It worships ancient leaders, and deifies them. It inscribes itself in documents, and then attributes sacredness to the documents. It voluntarily formulates its faith, and then surrenders its soul to the formulæ that it has created. It makes for itself temples, and it anoints priesthoods, lavishing its wealth upon them, as though to fix once for

all the form and scope of the spiritual life. What is an individual in the presence of such an establishment? By the side of, or even within, such a hoary institution, what signifies youth, which constantly slips from the grasp even of those who have it?

The beginning of the answer is that religion, as well as industry, the state, and general education, is sick, and that this sickness is due in material measure to the unfortunate cleavage between maturity and youth. Religion calls upon youth to conform, but the spirit of youth commands: "Experience for yourself; explore; create." Shall youth do this within recognized religion or outside it? Tradition says, or implies, "Outside." But this cleavage between maturity and youth is not in the inevitable nature of things. It became fixed when and because certain types of social organization once prevailed and do still to a lessened degree prevail. And this religious class-privilege, like other class-privileges, is reacting to the injury of its possessors and of what they hold dear. The self-injury to religion from its overvaluation of maturity is deep and vital. Maturity, given isolated control, can produce certain sorts of institutional efficiency, but it cannot prevent, it does not see the need of preventing, the institutional mechanization that produces ultimate decrepitude. To change the figure, it produces an engine that has just about power enough to stoke the fires under its own boiler.

We need not deny that the churches can live on indefinitely as religious clubs, nor that the provision of stated worship under the general traditions of Christianity will to some extent mollify the asperities of our civilization. The important question is whether it is

the business of religion to be more than a piece of civilization's furniture; more than an adjunct of purposes, policies, and standards rooted in special interests or representative of a period of history. If so, under what social auspices, and through what organs, shall we have the necessary critical thinking upon the actual values of civilization? Whence and through whom shall come the stimulus, age after age, to see human life just as it is? Whose voice shall be the first to speak for man as man? In what groups shall inquiring spirits pool their courage for the ever-renewed and ever-costly task of social re-creation? Is there, indeed, a Creative Spirit in which men partake, and is the church to be foremost in the sacrament of apprehending this Spirit, welcoming it and sacrificing self-interest and class-interest upon its altar? Shall our figure for the Divine Being continue to be an old man, or shall we take perpetual youth as our symbol for God? If so, must not a new place in religious institutions be offered to youth?

"Where is now thy God? We can do without him," says our self-sufficient, mechanized civilization. "Where is now thy God? I seize what I desire, and I hold it with my strong right arm," says special privilege. "Glory to the God who visited his people long, long ago," sings the church. "Oh, that I knew where I might find him," sighs the awakening soul of youth. The deepest scepticism of our time is that which is embedded in the implications of our customs and institutions—it is the scepticism of maturity, not of youth.

The supreme corrective for the ailments of modern youth is conscious participation with God and fellow men in the creation of a new order of society—a really

new order; one that aims at fundamentally fresh and universally good social experience. Dealing creatively with the deepest values—this is the proper work of youth, a work that best leads on into a creative, not stereotyped, maturity.

Let us, then, no longer exclude youth from the councils of the church, either local or general. This means far more than "giving them a hearing." Let us take the risk of giving real power and authority to the portion of society within which the divine quality of creativeness most readily and spontaneously leaps to its tasks. Young people's societies and departments steered by a headquarters staff of men and women no longer young —presented with a purpose and a constitution, and told just what to do week by week—can keep a portion of the young "in line" so that some further manipulation by adults is possible, but they furnish no adequate nurture for the creativity that is so sorely needed. We must provide scope within religion and the church for young people's powers of criticism, their readiness to experiment, their capacity for reversing themselves, their belief that the unprecedented is possible and that it can be better than any precedent. And we must not segregate them. This is a species of social stratification that injures both the upper and the lower stratum. Participation in the finalities in every phase of organized religion, participation in co-operation with the mature—nothing short of this is adequate.

Our chief problem here, as elsewhere, is to induce ourselves, the mature and privileged portion of the church, to humble ourselves, be good listeners, divest ourselves of a portion of our prerogatives, and become,

ourselves, fully co-operative. And let us be fully convinced that the greatest danger in this whole sphere is not that the young will assume too much power, or be lacking in respect for age and precedent, but that they will become religiously conventional. The gift is within them, but it needs to be stirred up.

The "message" of Christianity to youth will assume a different tone, and it will have a different content, when this point of view prevails. It will still be an "invitation," but not to a table of cooked spiritual viands; nor to membership in a society whose first law is self-imitation; nor to the mere soothing of a civilization that requires repentance. The invitation itself will be as mettlesome as our most spirited youths. It will concern the unfinished and unbegun tasks of Christianity; it will treat Christianity itself as unfinished; it will include a criticism of current life as drastic as that which Jesus meted out to his own times; and it will offer the church as the part of modern society in which young and old have greater opportunity and incitement than anywhere else for co-operative self-determination in the most weighty matters. Such a message, backed by a corresponding church fellowship—doubt it not—will attract the livest, most variant, most creative spirits among the young people, and they, in turn, will spread the fire to the rest.

The sum of the matter is "God with us"—God, the ever-youthful, summoning us perpetually to create new earths. Is it communion with God that youth needs? Youth will find him within everything—study, occupation, play, worship, the championship of unpopular causes—that makes for unprecedented good; particularly

wherever any one daringly and enduringly joins with him in creating the necessary conditions of a Christlike society. The variability of youth is a normal and proper organ for the self-revelation of God.

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